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ABSTRACT

One of a series of publications coming out of a 3-year project designed to improve evaluation and planning in community colleges, this monograph presents case studies illustrating alternative models of strategic planning. Chapter 1 provides an overview of current challenges to academic management, strategic planning, models of planning, and essential conditions for strategic planning. In addition, this chapter offers information on the series of regional workshops at which the case studies were first presented and on the uses of the case studies. Chapters 2 through 4 present case studies of the San Francisco Community College District educational master plan project; the Long Beach City College planning and budgeting process; Riverside City College's planning process; and the annual review and planning process of the Yosemite Community College District. Each case report presents a brief characterization of the planning project; information on organizational structures and planning motivations, premises, assumptions, processes, procedures, and techniques; a history and projections; and a general commentary. Finally, chapter 6 discusses the unique and common characteristics of the four strategic planning models, underscoring the importance of planning as a continuing process, proactive planning, leadership and support, and broad participation in the design of the system. A reading list and bibliography are included. (LAL)

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# MODELS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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FALL 1983

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from the project on

IMPROVING COMMUNITY COLLEGE EVALUATION AND PLANNING

jointly sponsored by the

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE, CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
AND
WESTERN ASSOCIATION ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR
COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

and partly supported by a grant from the federal Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education.

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The community colleges are rightly proud of their comprehensive programs, their responsiveness to diverse communities and people, and their traditions of local governance. Campus and state leaders of community colleges are realists who are accepting the challenge to reinforce the case for the contemporary community college. That case is likely to be most convincing if it is grounded in evaluation of outcomes, reasoned forecasting, and strategic planning which utilizes the professional talents within and across institutions. Many groups are now contributing to the achievement of these efforts. The FIPSE Project is making its particular contributions by focusing knowledge and experience of the colleges, the Accrediting Commission and the state agencies on the improvement of evaluation and planning.

Project objectives also include developing a clear statement of the responsibilities for evaluation and planning that are appropriate for state agencies, accrediting commissions, and for local community colleges. Tensions about the appropriate division of these responsibilities exist throughout the country. However, a long tradition of cooperation in Hawaii and California has created congenial atmospheres in which to analyze and clarify the proper delineation of roles.

Were it not for the help and assistance of countless others in Hawaii and California, the Project staff could not achieve the objectives of the FIPSE project. Although we do not have space to thank all of these individuals, we do want to recognize those who made special contributions to this publication. First, we thank the four host community college districts for sponsoring an invitational workshop and for sharing their experiences in planning. Individuals will be recognized in the case chapters. We are particularly grateful to Pat Kennedy, Riverside Community College District and Chester Case of Los Medanos College. These two distinguished faculty members served as recorders for the workshops and are the authors of the four case reports. Kennedy recorded the two Southern workshops and Case those in Northern California. We thank Sue Lundquist of the Accrediting Commission, Evelyn Stacey of the state Cahncellor's Office, and Rich Montori of Monterey Peninsula College for excellent work related to the publication series and other Project matters.

Finally, we appreciate the support from FIPSE. The Fund's grant has set in motion a series of commitments on the part of others whose support (in money and in kind) is essential to the successful completion of this Project.

Chuck McIntyre
Project Director

Director, Analytical Studies Unit
State Chancellor's Office
California Community Colleges

Robert Swenson
Project Co-Director

Executive Director, Western Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

Dale Tillery
Principal Consultant

Professor Emeritus, School of Education
University of California, Berkeley

MODELS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

IN

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

## PREFACE

This monograph on Models of Strategic Planning in Community Colleges is one of a series of papers from a three-year project to improve evaluation and planning in community colleges. The project is sponsored jointly by the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges and by the Western Association Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. Project work is concentrated in California and Hawaii, the jurisdiction of the Western Accrediting Commission. Support for the project is provided by community colleges in these states, the sponsoring agencies, and by the federal Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE).

The highest interest and involvement of community colleges in strategic planning was demonstrated in a series of regional workshops hosted by four California community college districts in November 1983. The chief executive officers and planning teams of the San Francisco, Long Beach, Rivrside and Yosemite districts joined with the directors and consultants of the FIPSE Project in designing and conducting four drive-in workshops featuring cases in institutional planning. Recognition of those who made the planning efforts and the workshops possible is found in the four chapters on institutional planning.

The November workshops were outgrowths of earlier project activities, in particular, the California Charrette on Planning held in March 1983 (San Francisco); and Spring 1983 institutes on evaluation and planning held at Honolulu Community College, Mission College, American River College, and Moorpark College. The institutes used materials and strategies derived from the Charrette and the 1982 Symposium on Learner Outcomes. There are publications for these and other Project activities.

One outcome of the Spring institutes was the widespread interest among the college administrators and faculty members in finding ways to share knowledge and techniques of planning and evaluation among neighboring colleges and colleges of like characteristics. Thus, the decision to conduct invitational workshops in various regions of California which focus on actual cases of strategic planning in community colleges.

The cases presented in the workshops and reported in the following chapters can be viewed as alternative models of strategic planning which have been tested against the realities of institutional life. The diversity of the host institutions and their different styles of planning suggest the usefulness of this monograph by community colleges in the several states.

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Chapter 1

# THE PURPOSES AND USES OF WORKSHOPS AND CASES IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

Chapter 1

# THE PURPOSES AND USES OF WORKSHOPS AND CASES IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

## CHALLENGES TO ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT

There may very well be a management revolution in American higher education (Keller, 1983). Certainly there are imperatives for new academic strategies as institutions face continuing fiscal constraints, political uncertainties, competition from others, and changing student bodies. But the future holds happier days which are no less challenging: How will colleges use new information technology in teaching and in curriculum design? What should and will their relations be with other suppliers of learning? In making their case for support, how will they use information which is accurate, relevant, comparative, and future-oriented? How will decisions be made about priorities, educational quality and productivity? These and related issues of strategic planning and decision-making are of particular importance to community colleges in 1984.

## WHY STRATEGIC PLANNING?

True, it is a fashionable idea, but there is really nothing very new about it. In fact, strategic planning is the rediscovery of old ideas. What is fresh is the systhesis of useful theory and good instituitonal practices. Thus, there is a body of wisdom and techniques which are adaptable to individual colleges. Strategic planning does, however, break with two other modes of planning: one (incrementalism) which is common in community colleges, and another (management science) which is not. The second mode needs little attention since is has never really found a home in higher education. Planning associated with management science takes various forms which are relatively "hard," requiring bureaucracies and hierarchies. They tend to be mechanistic and dominated by experts. These approaches to planning and decision-making fit neither educational institutions nor modern white collar and technological business and industry.

## OTHER MODELS OF PLANNING

The other model, incremental planning and decision-making, is very much at home in higher education. Keller claims that in 1983, 90% of academic management was incremental. Even its advocates refer to it as "muddling through," but claim that it has a number of advantages for academic institutions. Among the advantages of incrementalism are:

- Modest goals and steps toward goals

- o Recognition of the complexity of issues and of prediction
- o Sequential trial and error, and self correction
- o Negotiation among competing views
- o Pragmatic decisions

Few advocates, however, defend incrementalism in times of grave threat or of rapid change. It is viewed as moving away from ills rather than toward objectives. Neither this strategy nor those of scientific management are descriptive of the case reports that follow.

It seems reasonable to view "strategic planning" as a middle course between the two previously described modes of planning. This will be apparent as we first review a few of the major concepts of strategic planning and then read about their use in practice. There is a useful literature on strategic planning and decision-making, but no work is more readable than George Keller's recent book Academic Strategy (1983). We, like he, make no sharp distinctions between planning and decision-making because the two processes intertwine. It is the chain of planning--decision-making--planning...that is important; but not the plan.

## ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

There are essential conditions for successful strategic planning. Briefly, they are:

- o LEADERSHIP which touches people and causes them to act; which is synegistic and generates more leadership.
- o GOVERNANCE which is responsible, informed, collaborative, and non-authoritarian.
- o INFORMATION which is accurate, relevant, comparative and which includes demographic forecasting and trends.

These conditions are also among the most fundamental to institutional well-being.

## LIVING WITH STRATEGIC PLANNING

Because the four cases in this monograph will show how community colleges with different histories, organizational styles, and service communities learn to live with strategic planning, and to experience its outcomes, we will only briefly introduce these attributes of this mode of planning. What is it to live with strategic planning? Experience supports the theory of this fresh approch to college planning and decision making:

- o You are ACTIVE rather than passive in shaping your history.

- You LOOK AHEAD and focus on keeping your college in step.
- You are in COMPETITION/COLLABORATION with the other suppliers of education.
- You concentate on DECISIONS rather than on writing plans.
- You INVOLVE people in blending economic analysis, political maneuvering, and human resourcefulness.
- You concentrate on the FATE OF YOUR COLLEGE above everything else.

For some college personnel the above strategies may not describe as comfortable a life style as might be experienced in muddling through, or in moving in or moving away from ills rather than toward objectives.

There are rewards from strategic planning quite beyond an institution knowing what it wants to do, doing it well, and having the evidence to report its achievements. As might be anticipated from the theory of strategic planning, the following are some of the intrinsic outcomes reported by those who are involved in this mode of planing and decision making:

- The college environment is one of goal orientation
- There are high expectations
- People feel they are doing meaningful work
- Relationships are collaborative
- Resources are integrated
- The college copes with reality
- A climate of trust developes

These outcomes do not come easily, as we will learn from the four institutional cases.

USE OF THE CASE REPORTS

This monograph shares some of the strengths of the workshop presentations and has some of its own. However, we are conscious in both situations of the shortage of time or space to convey fully the complexities and problems in mobilizing leadership, commitments, and resources to plan in such a dynamic way. It was difficult putting the case experiences within the broader contexts of institutional history and environments--both internal and external. The report does, however, convey the understanding that came from hearing key participants in planning tell about their hopes, achievements, and disappointments. The case reports make no effort to replicate the vitality of the discussions between case

presenters and those from other colleges who wanted to draw implications for their own settings, or to identify alternative ways of doing things. Although it is no substitute for active participation in the workshops, we believe this monograph has captured the essentials of what was done, how people evaluated their experiences, and many of the outcomes of institutional planning.

Those who did attend (approximately 150 administrators, faculty, and resource people) found the workshops to be useful. The vast majority rated them as very useful. The case method was very well received, and the four district case presentations were given very high ratings. Many people would have liked more time for discussion, particularly about the implications of the models for other settings. Although there was little time to do more than suggest ideas about inter-institutional planning networks, there was much interest shown in sharing planning strategies, information, techniques, and evaluation experiences. Inter-institutional sharing was one of the objectives of the November 1983 workshops.

Pat Kennedy and Chester Case used similar techniques and care in gathering information for their chapters. Because the two writers use a common format in reporting the cases on strategic planning, the reader should be able to compare institutional experiences and look for common themes. These elements are:

1. A brief characterization of the planning project;
2. Motivations for the goals of the project;
3. Planning premises and assumptions;
4. Organizational structures for planning;
5. Processes, procedures, and techniques;
6. History and projection: What has been done; what is to be done;
7. Key themes in the discussion of the case presentation;
8. General commentary on planning as suggested by the case presentation.

The cases should be useful in a number of ways to community college readers who are beginning or are now involved in strategic planning. Among the most important uses are: (1) considering alternative approaches to planning; (2) comparing one's own experiences with those of the four models; (3) identifying resources for assistance; and (4) understanding the uses of planning in decision-making. The host teams were very candid about shortcomings in their projects, and about what they might do if they were to begin over. These are among the most valuable insights in shared experiences.

Chapters 2 and 5 were written by Chester Case, and Chapters 3 and 4 by Pat

Kennedy. The Preface, this Chapter, and Chapter 6 convey other aspects of the workshops. The Project Directors, Robert Swenson and Chuck McIntyre, discussed the relationship of the workshops to other objectives of the FIPSE Project; and Dale Tillery, who moderated the workshops, placed the case presentations within the context of planning concepts.

Chapter 2

# SAN FRANCISCO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

# EDUCATIONAL MASTER PLAN PROJECT

## INTRODUCTION

When Hilary Hsu became Chancellor of the San Francisco Community College District (SFCCD) in 1982, he made the launching of an Educational Master Plan Project a top priority. Now, a year and a half later, a large-scale, complex project in comprehensive strategic planning is in place and running. The Educational Master Plan Project has engaged the time, energy, and skills of numerous SFCCD personnel. Faculty (full- and part-time), managers, staff, students, and members of the Governing Board have been involved, as has a variety of people from the San Francisco community. In a sense, however, the title of the project is slightly misleading: though a master plan per se, was to be the much desired product of the project, the emphasis has been very much on the process of planning itself.

Presenters of the SFCCD case study described to the 47 workshop participants gathered on the fifth floor of the high-rise Downtown Center the assumptions undergirding the planning process, its structures, procedures, and participants. Chancellor Hsu began the presentation by reviewing the motivations of SFCCD for undertaking the Educational Master Plan Project. He said, in essence, we--the district--needed an intimate and thorough knowledge of ourselves; we needed to critically examine ourselves and gain self-knowledge so we could anticipate change and respond flexibly and effectively in order to maintain institutional vitality, quality and a "competitive edge." We needed, he said, a way to demonstrate our accountability and to document the quality and productivity of our programs in terms of learner outcomes, as well as to devise a means to allocate resources among competing priorities in an environment of uncertainty and change.

Previous planning, Hsu commented, had been in response to pressures for growth and expansion; and this growth and expansion was not entirely intentional nor by design. To overcome resultant duplications, unevenness, and fragmentation in district organizaiton and operations, the district needed a sense of direction. Hense, the Educational Master Plan Project, which has led to the recent promulgation of an extensive statement of mission and goals by the Governing Board, and the inauguration of a comprehensive, strategic planning process that flexibly and responsibly connects program review, budgeting, and accreditation processes.

The Educational Master Plan Project has developed in a particular context. San Francisco Community College District serves the unique, dynamic, and cosmopolitan city of San Francisco. Though small in actual geographical area, the district encompasses an almost overwhelming diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and economic activities. The

challenge to the district of designing and maintaining programs for its diverse clientele is compounded by factors of rapid change in demographics, student choices or curriculum, educational backgrounds and skills levels of students, and the local job markets. Further compounding the challenge are the contemporary statewide financial stringencies and uncertainties, which raise an ever present threat of cutbacks in programs and lay-offs of personnel.

The district itself is of recent origin, having been formed in 1970 through the merger of City College of San Francisco, founded in the mid-1930s, and the Adult/Occupational Division of the city public school system. There are two major divisions: the City College of San Francisco, which serves approximately 17,500 ADA and offers the district's credit-bearing courses, and the Community College Centers, which also serve approximately 17,500 ADA and offer only noncredit-bearing courses. A District Office constitutes the third major organizational entity. There are about 3,000 personnel in the district.

## DEVELOPING A DISTRICT EDUCATIONAL MASTER PLAN

### Premises

Key premises, or assumptions, have given shape and flavor to the SFCCD project. The process of planning would be continuous, it was determined early in the preliminary stages of the project, and would by systematic and cyclic. Program review is on a three-year cycle.

The process should be flexible and open to in-progress changes, hense the metaphor of the "loose-leaf binder" approach: a loose-leaf binder being accessible to constant change by addition, deletion, and revision. Emphasis would be on process and broad-based participation by all relevant constituencies of the district. This would maximize "buying in" and "ownership" of the process and its products by those who would use them, and at the same time minimize the likelihood that the Educational Master Plan would become ignored and unused.

The planning process, it was decided, should be in the character of strategic, comprehensive planning. It should actively seek and utilize data gathered from the district's external environment (local, regional, state) and from internal organizational operations. A future orientation should be built in. There should be a time table stipulated, resources allocated, and top-level support accorded. An outcome should be an Educational Master Plan, which would be "the foundation for informed decisions about resource/budget allocations, staff, facilities, educational programs and services, and the district's future directions." This plan would emanate from and interact with an instructionalized, multi-faceted process for information gathering and dissemination, program review, budgeting and planning--a process integrally interwoven into the organizational life of the district.

### Structures

In October 1982, Hsu established a Planning Council. Its charge, broadly

expressed, was to "guide the development of the Educational Master Plan and to provide the mechanisms for the on-going, continuous planning for the district after the Master Plan had been developed." A broad-based, large group, the Planning Council is representative of key district constituencies. It consists of two members of the Governing Board, six faculty, 12 administrators, and three classified staff. The Planning Council approved the work plan and time-line established for the project. It has reviewed the work of the task forces, provided spin-off special purposes sub-committees, and given guidance to the project. Along with the liaison functions of Chancellor Hsu, it provides a linkage between the Governing Board and the planning process.

Also in October 1982, Hsu created another structural element by appointing a faculty member, Tyra Duncan-Hall, as Project Coordinator, and established an office for the project. The coordinator, linking to the Office of Research and reporting to the Vice Chancellor of Educational Services, Nancy Swadesh, headed the preliminary efforts to prepare the work plan and organize the logistics and structures of the project, and now directs the project.

The Planning Council established six task forces. Their title designations indicate areas of institutional interest and concern. They are: (1) Instructional Services, (2) Student Support Services, (3) Facilities, (4) Fiscal Support, (5) Personnel, and (6) Public Information. Each task force consists of 18 members selected by constituent bodies among faculty, administrators, classified staff, and students, as well as community and business representatives. One task force was chaired by a business representative. The charge to the task forces was broad and inclusive. However, there was one specific product anticipated, and that was a district-wide mission and goals statement, which would be synthesized from the goals statement of each task force. Such a statement was adopted by the Governing Board in October 1983. Task forces were to identify issues, problems and constraints in their respective areas, to project needs, review existing district mission statements, goals and resource materials, and to devise strategies for attaining stated goals.

Project planners devoted attention to the process aspect of the project. For example, an orientation session was held for task force members. The charrette, an intensive, interactive group process, was used by the Planning Council to review, modify, and recommend the district's Mission Statement. Also, a connection was made with the FIPSE Project and its consultants. There was continuous modification of the process by the planners, which resulted in timely adjustments and corrections. The structure also incorporates existing organizational entities, such as management bodies, existing district committees, and organizational entities such as programs, departments, and offices classified as planning units.

Procedures

Two phases were set out for the project. Phase I, the phase for "planning to plan," organizing activities, information gathering, conducting pilot studies, and producing task force and district-wide mission and goals statements, has been accomplished. The project is now in Phase II, the

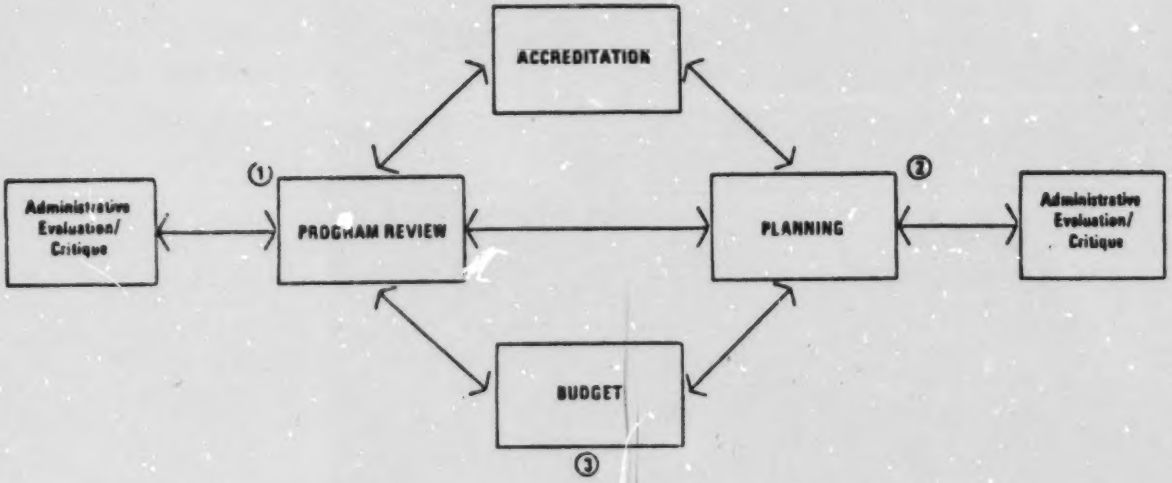
phase for "turning goals into action." At the time of the workshop, the project was 13 months old (October 1982 - November 1983). As part of a continuing planning process, the district, guided by the Educational Master Plan, is now moving into the implementation phase of the process.

## Planning Philosophy

The character of the planning process is consistent with the metaphor of the "loose-leaf binder." In procedure, it is non-linear, simultaneous, interactive, iterative, continuous and inclusive of planning, budgeting, program review and accreditation processes. Chart 2a depicts the process graphically by showing the arrows of interaction pointing in all directions.

CHART 2a

## PROGRAM REVIEW/PLANNING, BUDGETARY CYCLE



Ten volunteer departments or programs, serving as pilots, have already undertaken the Program Review Component of this integrated process. They were reported to have found "looking closely at themselves" a "rewarding" experience. This is a comprehensive review, reported Vice Chancellor Swadesh, that ties program planning to budget development. She said, "...[in program review] you are looking at student outcomes, program relevancy, possible programs, facilities, student demography, external environments, administrative support, and district mission and goals." From the experiences of the planning units volunteering for pilot study program review, approaches to the process are being refined and standardized.

## Structural Components

While the previous figure expresses the philosophy of the planning process, Chart 2b delineates more the structural elements, sequences, and direction of the overall planning activities.

Information gathering, dissemination and utilization has been important in shaping the district's mission and goals statement and in conducting the planning process. The Office of Research actively develops and disseminates information useful for planning. Concurrent with the work of the task forces, a community survey was conducted by means of a mail return questionnaire enclosed in the announcement of classes and schedules regularly mailed to community residents. The project coordinator undertook an extensive program of interviews, which included members of the Governing Board and a variety of community persons. Information was gathered on the external environment, such as demographics, economic forecasts, and occupation outlooks, as was information on internal operations of the district, such as costs, staffing data, student characteristics, enrollments, and FTE.

## Sorting and Sifting

The adaptability and responsiveness of the planning process was illustrated in its response to the unexpectedly abundant quality of strategies generated by the task forces. "They came in by the hundreds," observed Vice Chancellor Swadesh. Varying widely in magnitude, importance and feasibility, the flood of strategies was too much for the system to handle. Hence, a "one-time, one-shot" subsystem was set up by the Planning Council to "sort and sift" the strategies before they were entered into the planning process. The sub-committee was to classify the strategies into the following categories: (a) Consider for possible implementation, (b) Not for consideration, (c) Requires further study. Chart 2c shows the activities and flow of this subsystem.

CHART 2b

## PLANNING ACTIVITIES

## DEPARTMENTS AND PLANNING UNITS

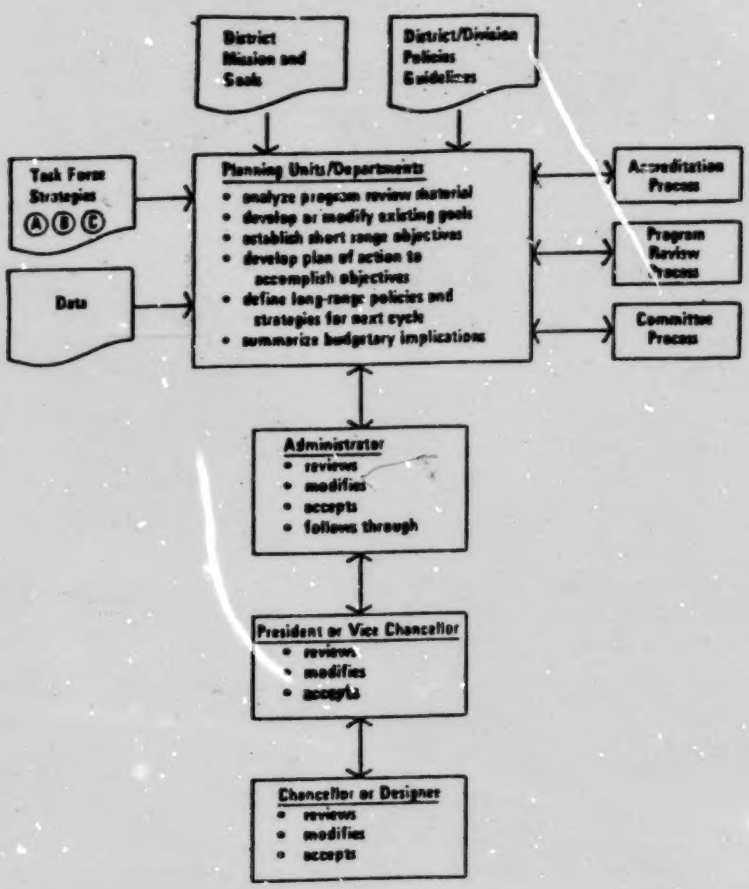
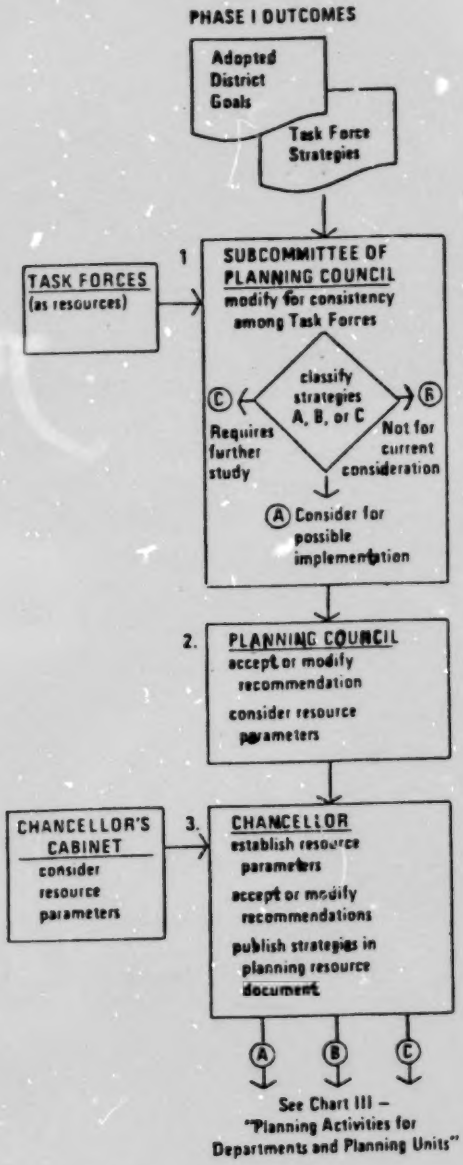


CHART 2c

# INCORPORATION OF TASK FORCE STRATEGIES INTO PLANNING PROCESS



## Activities to Date: Work to be Done

In 13 months, as of the date of the workshop, the Educational Master Plan project has accomplished its first phase, Phase I, which was for "planning to plan," organizing, and goal setting. Task forces have generated mission and goal statements from "bottom-up," as well as strategies for attaining these goals. The Governing Board has adopted a district-wide Statement of Mission and Goals that consolidates the work of the task forces. Literally hundreds of district personnel of all constituencies, as well as many persons from business and the community, have participated in the early phases.

Work remains to be done. Currently, the abundant harvest of strategies is being classified, and priorities and criteria are being developed. Planning units will undertake the program review process as the cycle continues. Also, a volume titled Directions for the 1980s is being completed. It is intended to be a practical working guide and aid for persons involved in planning. It will contain the fundamental district documents, such as the mission and goals statement, a glossary of terms defined operationally, and explications of the review and planning process. It will also present a "context for planning," in which relevant developments, issues, and events will be discussed. The context will include the external environment and strategic planning aspects, and the internal, institutional environment. To underscore the importance of a future orientation, a chapter will review the future literature, make note of trends, and consider the possible future developments among the district's educational competitors. As the planning dialogue continues, personnel will be invited to participate by submitting "white," or position papers advocating or explicating issues or proposals.

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Workshop participants were encouraged to engage in an analysis of the case study by raising questions, expressing viewpoints, or sharing experiences. Their contributions pointed to salient characteristics of the case study, as well as planning processes in general, and have signalled points of interest.

### Scope for Planning

Strategic planning requires a study of the environment external to the institution. For community colleges, though, there is a difficult question in how extensive a scope of the environment should be established as the geographical region for research and planning. An observation was offered by a workshop participant that to limit planning to a portion of a district, or even a district, will very likely be too confining, considering the mobility of students and the locales of possible employment.

District priorities come to bear on the defining of a scope for planning. Hsu said that the priority for educational services will be reserved for San Franciscan residents and businesses; hence, the district will be the primary geographical scope. Yet, data needs to be collected on a regional basis so a clear picture of trends can be developed. For

the Bay Area, it was suggested by a participant, that a region-wide information sharing, planning, and perhaps joint decision-making may be necessary to be effective in strategic planning.

## Faculty Attitudes and Participation

After hearing about the structure and mechanics of the Education Master Plan Project, one workshop participant wanted to know how faculty felt about it. Numerous kindred questions and comments were offered, signalling that faculty attitudes and participation is indeed a crucial issue.

The SFCCD presenters were candid in reporting that the project was met with initial faculty suspicion and apprehension as well as apathy. They also reported dedicated, effective participation which in fact grew as the project developed and an ever enlarging number of district personnel became involved. The hostility or apathy, they observed, could be expected in any similar project and must be dealt with. If you don't get participation, they cautioned, you may get a plan but it will be merely a shelf document and nothing will really happen.

Why is there an apparent endemic opposition, apathy, reluctance to participate among faculty? Change is threatening, for one thing, and generates fear. Long established routines result in an inertia. Suspicion can well be the legacy of prior planning efforts that came to naught. Very potent is the inevitable perception that program review is really program evaluation. It is well known that program evaluation in a time of financial crisis can lead to program cutbacks and personnel lay-offs; would a sensible person fashion a noose and place it around his/her neck?

## Process is Paramount

How the planning is done is of vital importance to the outcomes of the planning. Great care and attention should be devoted to the process aspects of gaining participation. Vice Chancellor Swadesh argued that if you believe in participation, then you must really do it. Hsu observed that establishing credibility at the outset is vitally important. Yet, Swadesh commented, "...no matter how much participation you get, there is always going to be someone out there who doesn't like what you are doing." Despite an irreducible measure of opposition, a momentum toward participation and acceptance for a planning process will build and engage an appreciable proportion of district personnel if the SFCCD experience is indicative. Once it is clear to a faculty that the planning process is a serious business and that participation has consequences, as in budget allocations for instance, the process gains adherence. Participants will "buy in" as the integrity of the process is tested and found to be solid.

## Why the Three-Year Program Review Cycle?

The case study presenters were asked why the span of three years had been selected for the Program Review. "Because one year is too often and five years is not often enough," they responded. Though made partly in humor,

the response indicates a recognition of a pace that is perhaps individual to SFCCD. Perhaps there can be no single best cycle for a district's planning process or for its program review. There are, however, common issues related to the length of the cycle: synchronization with accreditation processes; coordination with program evaluation; and proration of faculty energy and resources.

COMMENTARY

The SFCCD Variation on Strategic Planning

As there is diversity among districts, there will be diversity among the approaches to strategic planning they develop. Influencing the approach a given district evolves will be its community setting, its history, traditions and norms, its organizational character and processes, its human knowledge and fiscal resources, and its qualities of leadership. Thus, it would be quite expectable that SFCCD would evolve an approach to strategic planning that is inclusive, incremental, broadly participative, continuous and equipped with political devices effective for building consensus and coalitions, inasmuch as the district is set in a highly diversified cosmopolitan setting and in itself enfolds the wide range of diversified programs offered by the more traditional, historic City College and the more non-traditional Community College Centers. The approach is participative and described as "bottom-up," yet the district has promulgated a statement of mission and goals to anchor parameters and delimit options in planning. As implied by the "loose-leaf binder" metaphor for the Educational Master Plan, the planning process is a flexible, adaptable one that allows for the testing and trying of ideas in process, for compromise and accommodation, well before they reach the point of decision, thus forestalling head-on confrontations of fixed positions.

The SFCCD approach to planning elicits leadership throughout the process. Very important is the leadership of the Chancellor, whose support legitimates the process and marries it to authority. The Chancellor's leadership imparts a sense of important purpose and a vision to the process as well as the Educational Master Plan; he strives to link the future to the present. The process is elevated above the merely routine district operation when the Chancellor ties it to the basic goals of the district. Leadership in planning is elicited at all levels of the organization. Personnel from all constituencies participate in leadership work (acting on a vision to propound goals, mission and strategies) by contributing critiques, problem-solving strategies, innovative ideas, and facilitating and moving the process along.

Planning for Success

Interestingly, the SFCCD case study brings to light and invites conjecture on some of the problems created by success. Success can create problems; thus, planners are reminded to contemplate and prepare contingencies for the unexpected or unintended consequences of success as well as those of failure or error. As was reported, the SFCCD task forces generated a profusion of strategies. A similar elicitation of an abundance of ideas,

needs, wants, advocacies would be the probable outcome for other successful, working processes. Among the ideas generated very likely will be ideas that propose change in the process itself. The managers of the process, committed to a pattern of success, are then put in the paradoxical position of defending the integrity of an innovation-bringing process against innovation directed at itself, as well as guarding it against an overwhelming overload. A planning process needs to arrive at a means to adjudicate and sort the ideas as the SFCCD system did. Ironically, in defending itself and the larger ideas that it stands for, the process compromises its openness and provides its critics with the evidence that its professed openness is less than perfect.

Change is clearly a desired, though not inevitable outcome of the strategic planning process. As a change producer, the process will be embraced by some. But, it will be resisted by others because they may perceive change as disruptive to their preferred view of the organization, counter-productive, or even personally threatening. If the process is working, it will intensify the concerns of those who regard change askance. The more effective the process is, the more it will cause concern.

Portents of change can unloose in some apprehensions of uncertainty an anxiety, even if the changes are readily justifiable as salutory for the district. Hence, the process needs to buffer the impact of its own success in order to minimize resistance, which if not mitigated can be mobilized and coalesced into a counter-movement. Even as it attempts to ensure the survival and health of the district, the process, by its success, can energize and make overt heretofore latent issues of authority, organizational discipline, autonomy or centralization.

A successful, broad-based, participative approach to strategic planning will consume a great amount of participants' energy and occupy much of their time. Their reward will be a successful process that produces worthwhile benefits for their district. But success exacts costs. Faculty members, for instance, must go on "over-time" to participate effectvely. Their regular work goes on, while participation is add-on. They cannot be expected to sustain for long the pace and level of engagement that success requires. A successful process uses up its participants. Their primary duties call them back to the classroom. When they go, they take with them the skills, knowledge, the sense of purpose, understandings, shared experiences, in short, the savvy they have gained by their participation and feedback into the process. Their successors (if they can be found, motivated, and drawn into the process) will need to be "brought up to speed," and in an important sense, "sold" on the viability of the process as it is, and the worth of its products. These successors are unlike the pioneers of the process; they are stepping on to a moving train, while the pioneers helped set its direction and get it started. The induction of newcomers into the process should be carefully and thoughtfully planned and accomplished.

## The Importance of Information

The SFCCD case study underscores the very great importance that information can assume in planning and decision-making. How information is gathered, from whom, how it is disseminated and utilized become

important matters for the process. In the political economy of the district, information becomes a commodity of great worth.

The salience of information, its role and character, invites conjecture. In its gathering and processing, it would appear, a specialized technology is engendered, attended by an arcane language, esoteric concepts, and a mystification of the process and its products. Quantified data seem to eclipse qualitative data. Persons conversant with the technology become the information-rich, the information-haves. Those who have information and can use it are advantaged vis-a-vis the information-poor, the information have-nots, who are not conversant with the technology. Could there develop in a district a stratification of personnel along the lines of information possession and use? It would seem important for a district in which information has become critical for entry into participation in planning to devote considerable attention to the demystification of the information technology. Staff development could inform and train personnel in accessing and using information. Also, it would seem important to try to maintain in the information system some semblance of balance between quantified "hard" data, and normative, qualitative "soft" data.

Chapter 3

# LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE

# PLANNING AND BUDGETING PROCESS

## INTRODUCTION

John C. McCuen, Superintendent/President of Long Beach City College (LBCC) welcomed the more than 60 participants to the FIPSE Drive-In Workshop on Community College Planning on November 9, 1983. He immediately set the tone for the day-long workshop by stressing their approach of "strategic planning" rather than incremental planning, especially in these times of financial cutbacks.

McCuen's discussion opened with an explanation of his own background in planning which included eight years' involvement in planning in the Los Angeles Community College District, participation on various accreditation teams, and his awareness of the State Chancellor's Office interest in planning along with the FIPSE Project. Precisely because of current financial restraints on community colleges, he felt planning was essential.

LBCC's approach to planning was geared to opening up communication among several constituencies on campus. The President met with various groups in an effort to get strong support for planning from all constituencies. LBCC believes that without strong administrative support planning cannot work. Dr. McCuen was especially mindful not to appoint "a planner." Rather, his intention was to involve a large proportion of the institution's staff in the planning process because he believes it is a responsibility to be shared.

The underlying assumption to LBCC's approach to planning was to develop a continuous system that could operate smoothly, right through the five-year review of the Accrediting Commission. In this way when the visiting team arrives, the planning process is already functioning and an artificial environment does not have to be created.

## DESCRIPTION

### Premises

The Long Beach City College District, which includes the Liberal Arts Campus, the Pacific Coast Campus, and various satellite locations, operates on several premises: That the planning process should be of an ongoing nature; that communication between those involved is critical to the outcome of their planning process; that a strong commitment from all segments of the college is imperative, namely the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Trustees.

Keith Roberts, one of LBCC's two planning coordinators, affirmed McCuen's earlier point that the Chief Executive Officer and the Board must be committed to the planning process. Chart 3a was used to show the overall design of the first year of planning. Roberts stressed the point that his role as "coordinator" was to "facilitate the planners"--not to plan himself.

Procedures

Initially, a small pre-planning group got together and agreed to use the nine accreditation standards as criteria in the first year of the planning process.

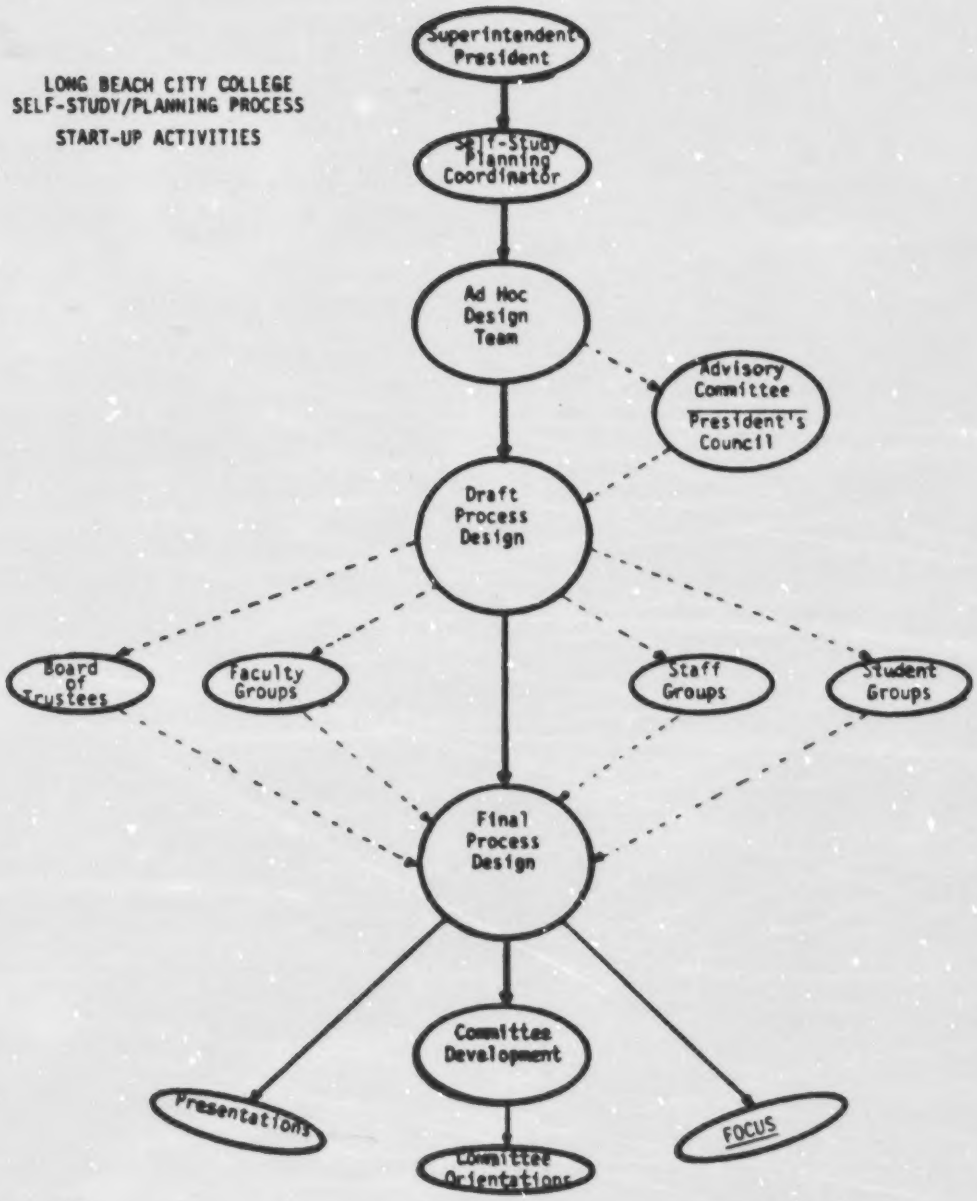
To broaden the communication process, LBCC used the President's Council composed of the Academic Senate, the California Teachers Association, the classified staff, and the Associated Student Body as an advisory group to check the planning design it developed. When the design was completed, the planners had a retreat with the full Board and the Executive Commitee (President and Vice Presidents) and reviewed the full process. It was at the retreat that the process was approved by all the important constituencies of the college.

During the early stages of the process, the planning facilitators spoke to the various constituencies to inform them of the planning progress. Additionally, they developed a brief "newspaper" called Focus which was distributed to all college staff. This also helped facilitate communication. The committees were organized around the nine accreditation standards and were selected from a large cross-section of staff. An original slate of 200 names was given to the coordinators by the constituencies. From this list the coordinators recommended nine committees to the President. Approximately 135 names were finally selected. The process is illustrated in Chart 3b.

CHART 3a

LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE
SELF-STUDY/PLANNING PROCESS

START-UP ACTIVITIES




KEY

----- Consultative role

CHART 3b

COMMITTEE SELECTION PROCESS

One strong consideration for committee formation was balance, both horizontal (sex, college area, campus division, ethnicity) and vertical (faculty, classified, managers and students). Each committee had a "facilitator" acting as a consultant to the committee and responsible for paperwork. An additional balance was achieved by making sure that no committee membership represented a vested interest, i.e., everyone in personnel would not be assigned to the institutional staff committee.

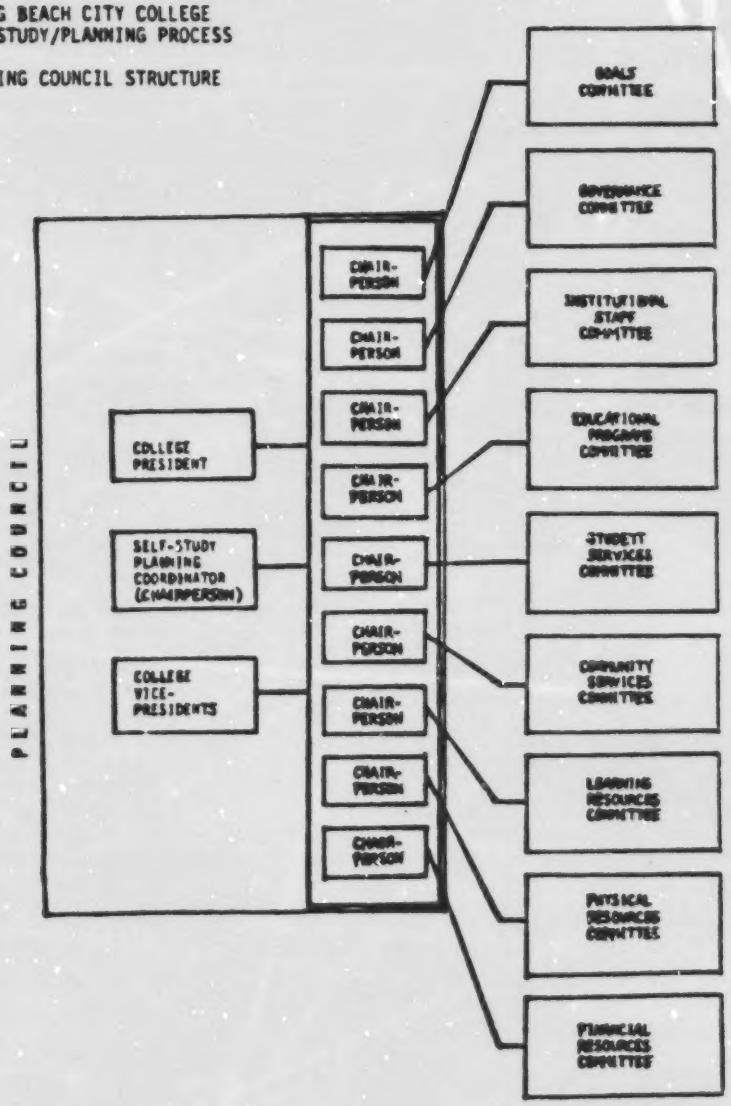
Chart 3c shows the Planning Council that LBCC established to maintain momentum and coordination among the various committees. The Council was composed of the committee chairs, who had not been pre-assigned when committees were first developed. The chairpersons were chosen by the members of the committees. This group of nine chairpersons, along with the Vice President, President, and planning coordinators, comprised the Planning Council.

In addition to the nine committees, five environmental scan teams were developed. These were teams, not committees. Three faculty members were selected to serve on each team because of their experience in the area. The teams produced 79 futures assumptions concerning such areas as: lifestyle, demography, employment, public policy, and education.

CHART 3c

LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE
SELF-STUDY/PLANNING PROCESS

PLANNING COUNCIL STRUCTURE



The Board, the President's Council, and the committee chairpersons attended another day and a half retreat, a year after the first one. They sorted through the 137 appraisal items prepared by the nine committees and the 79 assumptions prepared by the scan teams. They selected a total of 49 appraisal items and 13 assumptions as the basis for the college plan for the coming year. From these, college objectives and the implementation designs were developed.

## Reflections

In retrospect, the "coordinator" offered several pointers on what the team had learned:

1. Calendar - There are certain times of the year when it is more difficult to get things done: i.e., first month of school, finals, etc. Being aware of this in advance will preclude holdups in productivity.

2. Committee size - Turnover became a problem if the committee was small. Credibility was maintained through an open, honest communication system regarding reappointing people, due to the natural, normal turnover. Retaining committee balance was an important consideration. Student changes were a special problem because of their obvious turnover.

3. Written production from the committee was aided by advanced organization. The nine committees were also provided with "concept papers" from which the committees produced a better product. Reporting back to constituencies was difficult but vital. Feedback was not as strong as it needed to be.

4. The President and Board must lead and show their support. A service luncheon, with over 100 attending, was held to honor those involved. McCuen met several times with each committee to bring them up to date on developments within the college and of events in Sacramento. He regularly expressed his appreciation for their efforts.

5. Focus, the newsletter to all staff, was important because it facilitated information flow.

6. Having two coordinators was particularly important, because the dialogue that comes from a "team effort" fosters a better planning process. Also, bouncing ideas off each other helps, especially if the two team members are complementary to each other in terms of their thinking patterns and different responsibilities within the college.

7. The plan is clear but attaining college-wide commitment to the plan is a continuing effort. Problems centered in answering such questions as: What is the

relationship of the new Planning Council to the operational committees of the college?

In retrospect, John McCuen voiced a number of concerns he felt after the first year.

1. If an institution just follows the "self-study process" no real strategic planning can take place. Incremental planning is not sufficient to produce a creative product.

2. The planning process should drive the budget. But the financial resources committee and the budget committee were both in operation at the same time. This was a problem that needed to be solved so that integration and cohesion could occur.

3. Here and now priorities were not being dealt with.

4. Senior management was not sufficiently involved in the planning process.

5. It was difficult to keep committee members happy over a long period of time. Effort had to be made to keep committees motivated.

6. Credibility of the process had to be maintained. Committee members needed to see the fruit of their labor. This was why the planning process had to drive the budget.

CHART 3d

LONG BEACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE

SELF-STUDY PLANNING PROCESS

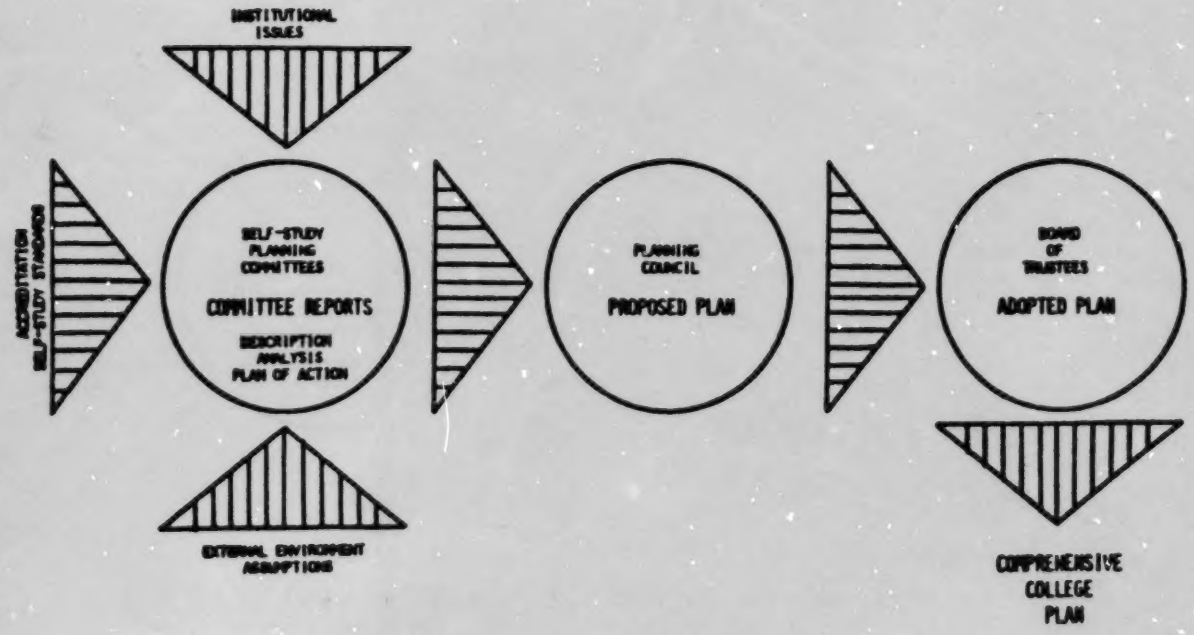
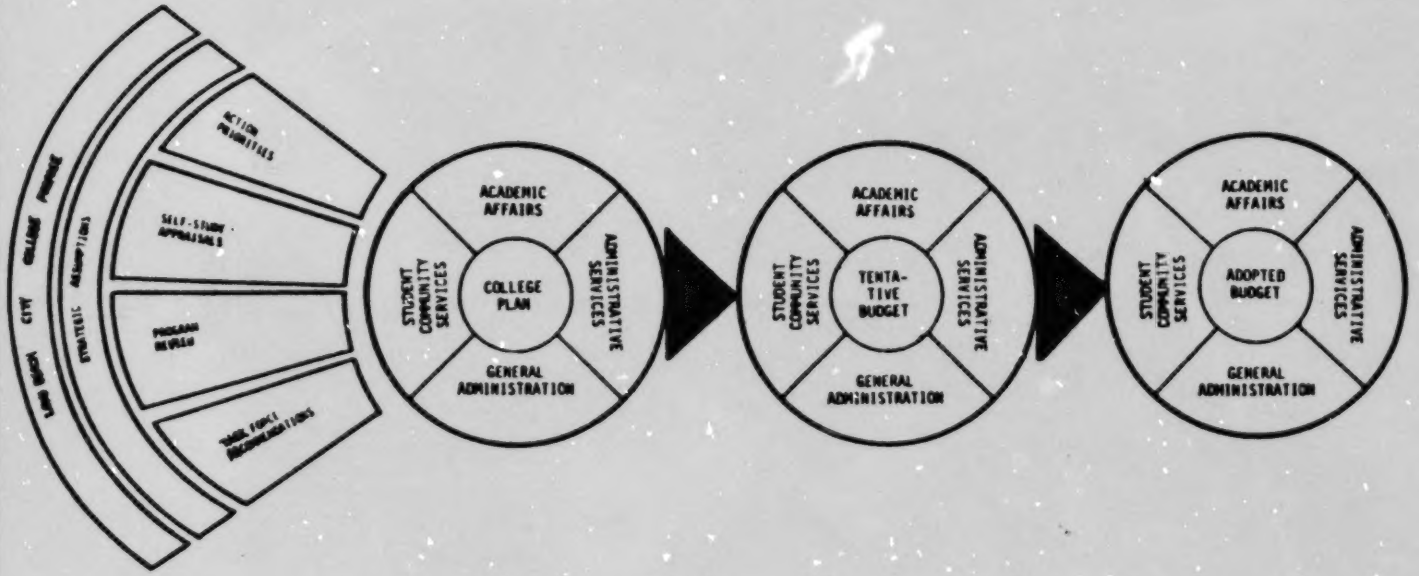


CHART 3e

# LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE
# 1984-85 PLANNING-BUDGETING PROCESS



## THE SECOND YEAR

As the process continued and LBCC moved into its second year of planning, Keith Roberts, Jim Kossler and others consulted Academic Strategies, In Search of Excellence, Megatrends, Japanese Management, and other selected readings to gain clearer perspectives on "strategic planning" as opposed to "incremental planning." The staff also looked at what other successful colleges were doing.

One of the conclusions they drew was that the budget was not developed with an organized plan or any reference to the planning process. The problem was one of integration. Consequently, they produced a different, more complex design (Chart 3d) which included the first year design plus all the other college-wide activities. At this point in the case study presentation, McCuen cautioned about using "wiring diagrams" like Chart 3c. He explained their usefulness to the planning coordinators and council in communicating, but that they could be a turn-off to the general staff and faculty. Chart 3e is even more complex! (though Keith Roberts claims it is relatively simple!) Complexity is in the eye of the beholder!

The "self-study role" is to examine internally and externally what needs to be done in an area of the college as compared to the program review process that shows weaknesses and strengths of individual programs. All of this has to fit into the budget development process.

In addition to the nine self-study committees, the coordinators developed the idea of specialized "task forces." In contrast to committees, task forces are short-term and more action oriented. There were four task forces: academic affairs, student and community services, administrative services, and general administration. They saw how the nine committees could be neatly related--and kept in tact--with the task forces by having a committee person represent the committee on appropriate task forces, i.e., goals and govenance on the general administration. This is a way for the nine committees to be plugged into the action. Their ultimate goal is to develop one college plan that produces one college budget. The outcome is a planning/budgeting system. Chart 3e is the graphic representation of the total college plan: an integrated calendar. In this way they can track institutional movement, relate to the accreditation standards once every five years; and use statewide priorities, documents from other colleges, and college-wide opinion surveys to check their progress and growth.

Activities to Date: Work to be Done

Changes between first and second-year approaches were made with positive reactions from the committees. The boiling-down process worked to the college committees' advantage because many tasks are being handled by the self-study committees. They are beginning to develop strategic assumptions and action priorities (those things that are too narrow to be considered a strategic assumption). LBCC's self-study committees are now working to finish the design of the first-year plan--with the objectives and implementation design which includes who's going to do various projects and when.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Workshop participants were asked to analyze the case study by raising questions, expressing opinions, and sharing experiences. The interactions between the participants and the LBCC team have yielded significant points of mutual interest to all.

HOW DID YOU GET THE BOARD TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU WERE DOING?

They were involved from the very beginning at the retreat. They were a part of the project each step of the way. The President of the Board and the President served on the Goals Committee. They were brought along through the process.

DID YOU HAVE BOARD MEMBERS SERVING ON OTHER COMMITTEES?

No. This was discussed, but it was decided to use only the President of the Board on the Goals Committee.

WHAT IS THE MEMBERSHIP ON THE TASK FORCES--SPECIFICALLY THE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS TASK FORCE?

We haven't arrived there yet. Each task force is developing their own membership which will include chairs from the committees represented. For example, the General Administration Task Force is comprised of the Executive Committee, chairman of the Goals Committee, and chairman of Governance.

SINCE TWO-YEAR SCHOOLS REPRESENT THE COMMUNITY--IS THERE NO THOUGHT OF HAVING THE COMMUNITY REPRESENTED?

The community is wired into the process. There is an active advisory committee that operates in the community and an active group of foundation members that are working on a mission statement. This group includes about 50 prominent people from the community.

GETTING FORECASTING INFORMATION IS IMPORTANT--DID YOU PAY ATTENTION TO THIS?

Yes. We worked with environmental scanning teams on such things as demographics and public policy. Expertise from our faculty was pulled from the various departments (math, history, social sciences). They went out and found information in their area of research. Then at the retreat the assumptions and findings were boiled down to about 13 issues--things like shifting employment, rise of Indochinese refugees, etc. The State Chancellor's Office worked with us on this and developed environmental scans (more extensive than what LBCC developed).

WHAT IS A STRATEGIC ASSUMPTION?

A shared vision of the future by senior management. The President and Vice Presidents were asked to put their heads together on several topics/issues (student body, economy, student services, etc.) and work out a consensus of their vision for the next 3 - 5 years down the road. It's not critical that they be accurate (they have to do this every year anyway) but what is critical is that the rest of the planning team knows what assumptions about the future are held by senior management.

CAN YOU GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF A STRATEGIC ASSUMPTION?

Under educational programs: "The economic crisis forecasts a reduction and reorganization in education programs at LBCC. However, the process of restructuring the educational programs is guided by the purpose, program review, and careful planning rather than fiscal expediency."

John McCuen: Another one is--"there will be a continuing move towards state centralization and a continuing counter effort to stop it!"

As another example, Chuck McIntyre said colleges might project a 7% increase in funding for 1984-85. He suggested that budget officers develop three different scenarios to help guide the college down the road as we look at other kinds of planning and program review.

McCuen finished the answer to the question by voicing his reluctance to discuss this because they haven't really had enough time to gain the necessary perspective. However, he explained that the chairs of all the task foorces (three Vice Presidents and the President) are constantly getting together and meeting in order to explore strategic assumptions.

DOES FACULTY GET REMUNERATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING PROCESS?

No. But one factor that probably causes committees to stay with things is that the President spends time with them--so they feel they have his ear--this may mean more than dollars to them.

WHO DID THE SECRETARIAL WORK FOR EACH COMMITTEE?

One committee member acts as facilitator. That person is a consultant for the committee and responsible for the paperwork. (Bob Swenson commented that he'd seen the technique of making the administrator on the committee the secretary--since they have the secretarial help. This might also keep them from talking too much...)

DID YOU HAVE A PROGRAM EVALUATION PROCESS IN PLACE PRIOR TO THE START OF THIS?

Built into the self-study planning process is the annual retreat--an opportunity to see how people feel. More faculty attend this than any other segment of the college. All through the year the planning council is the adjuster of the system. LBCC did not have a planning program review process last year. It's coming up now. That will feed directly into the system.

DOES PROGRAM REVIEW INCLUDE AN ESTIMATION OF ENROLLMENT, NUMBER OF STUDENTS, NUMBER OF SECTIONS IN CERTAIN AREAS?

Yes, that's included in the program review process. That's what the grand design is for this year.

HOW ARE DEPARTMENTAL AND INDIVIDUALS' PLANNING AFFECTED BY THE ENERGY OUTPUT THAT GOES INTO THE TOTAL PLANNING PROCESS? (OBVIOUSLY ENERGY IS BEING PULLED AWAY FROM OTHER THINGS.)

It was acknowledged that there are, obviously, only so many hours to go around.

One respondent to this question indicated that much good feeling is created when faculty see that their input and suggestions are implemented immediately. Many recommendations from the committees are already being acted upon, so they're seeing their efforts utilized.

Sometimes John McCuen recognizes a natural tendency on his part to circumvent the system by trying to deal with a crisis situation on the spot. When he catches this he goes right to committee members and "confesses." He felt this is extremely important to maintain credibility in the system. This encourages morale and thus enhances energy output.

DESCRIBE THE APPROACH TO PROGRAM EVALUATION.

Each of the educational programs has major headings and sub-programs and a set of data on each of these with trends indicated. These are based on the standards of the college. Working with the cost analysis of each program--so it knows what the cost is--the program is then measured against subjective considerations.

THERE IS A FUNDAMENTAL SENSE OF "PROCESS" HERE--HOW DID YOU GET PEOPLE TO SHARE THE VISION ON MISSION AND GOALS? (The inquirer felt that the process works when people believe in it.)

The book In Search of Excellence was again referenced. John McCuen began answering this by saying much attention must be given to the overall vision by those who initially believe in it and try to foster it. For example, this month is devoted to "LBCC pride." At the beginning of the year's activities, he addressed the topic of pride and communicated the overall vision to be "In Search of Excellence to Control Our Destiny." McCuen believes one must say it over and over again and that it needs to show up in school publications. You have to behave like you mean it, even if you get only one person at a time to believe it. It could take ten years! It won't happen overnight.

In support of this idea, Dale Tillery shared a point former President Eisenhower once made that "the plan is nothing and the process is everything."

ONE WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT SHARED A VIEWPOINT ON THE IDEA OF "CONSENSUS": HIS CONTENTION WAS THAT YOU REALLY CAN'T BUILD CONSENSUS BECAUSE OF CONFLICTING VALUE SYSTEMS WITHIN INSTITUTIONS. HE ARGUED THAT TRYING TO BUILD CONSENSUS DRIVES OUT OPPOSING VALUE SYSTEMS.

Dale Tillery responded that consensus and agreement are not the same thing. Tillery thinks that community colleges may be in the forefront of strategic planning.

John McCuen responded by saying that if by consensus the inquirer meant unanimity, he agreed. A unanimous view about anything is obviously difficult to achieve.

AFTER A BIT OF FURTHER DISCUSSION THE FOLLOWING NOTE WAS HANDED TO DALE TILLERY. WRITTEN BY THE ACADEMIC DEAN AT LBCC, IT FURTHER ILLUMINATED THE QUESTION OF CONSENSUS AND OFFERED A CLARIFYING DISTINCTION BETWEEN TWO KINDS OF CONSENSUS.

On the matter of consensus building, we must distinguish between "consensus on perspective" and "consensus on specific action." Institutions of higher learning are notorious for lacking either type of consensus.

Dr. McCuen has successfully accomplished a breakthrough on building a "consensus on perspective" among the leadership of all the college constituencies. Specifically, this leadership basically agrees that:

1. The college is facing a serious fiscal problem.

2. The world has changed significantly and we cannot do "business as usual."

3. A clear direction is necessary for our college to

survive and preserve its autonomy.

4. Strong administrative leadership is necessary in the formulation of this direction.

OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTARY

During the FIPSE Workshop several salient ideas emerged. Long Beach City College has undertaken an on-going strategic planning process from which have surfaced key items that are applicable to community college planning coordinators regardless of demographic, employment, or environmental differences.

The idea that planning should be a continuous process provides a useful approach to community college planners especially in times of increasing financial restraints. By utilizing a continuous process, as LBCC has done, even the visitation by an accrediting team can be neatly folded in. Thus, the accreditation process is not an interruptive intrusive event, but a natural experience in an already existing and smoothly-running planning process.

Leadership commitment was stressed during several points in the workshop. Without a truly strong and supportive Board and administration, the planning process loses its power. That commitment must go beyond rhetorical exercise and make itself "felt." Because an institution is composed of so many varying constituencies, the top leadership must use repetition to advance college ideals. Eventually, the message will be received college-wide. This, along with administrative action, provides a strong college planning process on a solid foundation.

A broad-based institutional involvement was the key to the LBCC planning process. Additionally, there was empnasis on the advantage of dyadic leadership. Interestingly, this is a throw-back to the ancient Socratic method of dialogue. With the advantage of interpersonal interaction, the sum of the dyadic partners yields more than the actual number of people. Two heads can produce more creative ideation and provide the benefits of varied backgrounds and experiences. Further, they can transcend the institutional "role" so that the whole institution can represent the common good.

A final idea which surfaced clearly was the use of scanning teams. The value of these lies in their inherent ability for review and self-correction. Also, scanning teams can operate more easily because they are smaller and more objective. They become a kind of trouble-shooter for the institution.

Long Beach City College has as its ultimate aim the development of one college budget that is driven by one college plan. This is being brought about through a continuous system of strategic planning that has strong administrative and Board support.

Chapter 4

# RIVERSIDE COLLEGE

# PLANNING PROCESS: EXCELLENCE THROUGH INNOVATION

Chapter 4

# RIVERSIDE CITY COLLEGE

# PLANNING PROCESS: EXCELLENCE THROUGH INNOVATION

## INTRODUCTION

Charles Kane, Superintendent/President of Riverside City College, welcomed the 30 participants to the FIPSE Drive-In Workshop at Riverside City College on November 10, 1983.

Kane began the presentation by referring to his visit to the Educational Management Institute at Harvard University this past summer (1983). He noted that George Keller, author of Academic Strategy, was one of the participants involved. Keller's book has provided additional insight on strategic and long-range planning. Kane stressed his orientation to strategic planning, its ongoing nature and its flexibility.

Those attending the workshop were introduced to the history of Riverside City College (RCC) which began operation in 1916 and was one of the first junior colleges in the state. The college emphasized transfer education and received its momentum from A. G. Paul, who served for 30 years as the first President of Riverside City College. Because of his heavy involvement in the community and the support he received from a stable Board of Trustees, a strong college/community relationship was developed. An example of Paul's leadership could be seen in the long-range plans for the quadrangle area of the college which were completed in the 1950s. Just recently (1982) the college dedicated the quadrangle in his honor.

RCC, which is officially operated by the Riverside Community College District, geographically encompasses the Val Verde Elementary School District and the Alvord, Jurupa, Moreno Valley, and Riverside Unified School Districts. Plans are currently underway to annex the Corona-Norco area to the district. The surrounding community area includes several other institutions of higher learning: University of California at Riverside, California State University at San Bernardino, University of Redlands, Loma Linda University, and California Baptist College. This intellectual environment has enabled RCC to attract a strong, well-prepared faculty. March Air Force Base has also provided the community with many fine families who relocate here.

Kane discussed the strength and strong background of the current faculty, noting that the senior faculty has a clear understanding of RCC's purpose. During the 1960s there was a rapid hiring of some very highly qualified faculty but there was also a concurrent loss of a sense of mission and purpose. Thus the vision of the institution had been somewhat obscured. During this period the college's faculty developed a reputation of being militant and were strongly committed to collective bargaining--an issue that has begun to resolve itself in recent years.

In the mid-70s Foster Davidoff became President and designed a

reorganization which gave some authority back to the Board of Trustees. Six years ago, Chuck Kane was named Superintendent/President and found that the faculty, over the years, had developed different perspectives. He has worked to build a more cohesive institution along with his goal to build RCC team management.

DESCRIPTION

Climate

Dr. Frank Budd, Dean of Occupational Education and Co-chair of the Accreditation Self-Study Team, explained that this year RCC is focusing on creating a stronger institution by stressing EXCELLENCE, PRIDE, and INNOVATION in a climate that helps create cohesion.

Budd stressed that the individual at the top must be committed to planning and change. When the management team came together in 1978 they discussed objectives and goals. Their goal was to implement MBO, Management By Objectives, which creates a foundation for motivation and commitment from staff members and allows the planning process to take place with greater flexibility. The MBO approach is being achieved partly through the insight gained by a number of workshops in 1978, out of which came several key concepts: the need for a concise mission statement, goals and objectives, activities and tasks, and a network and schematic outline. Though the team had the process running effecively, there was still some confusion as the targets had not been hit. Hence the team shifted from objectives to outcomes (simple one- or two-word sentences which allow the team to become result oriented).

Procedure

Budd explained that when the focus is on outcomes there is no concern with terminology, sequence or process. Outcomes were discussed initially by the Vice Presidents with their staff. For example, in 1979-80 ten outcomes were determined. This year there are eight expected outcomes and the key words are: EXCELLENCE, PRIDE, AND INNOVATION. As outcomes were developed, other kinds of things developed. Out of the MBO approach, task forces grew. When task forces are formed, resources are available to support the task forces.

Another effort to develop a positive climate at RCC is an annual management workshop composed of about 30 people who assess their progress during the past year. For example, in 1982-83 the team noted several achievements: program review, accreditation, student assessment program, expanded parking lots, improved faculty participation, a more active program through the RCC foundation, introduction of word processing, and a fee-structured community activities program. Out of the brainstorming session at the annual management retreat, 56 items of accomplishment were discovered and related to objectives and expected outcomes which had been agreed to. The annual retreat sensitizes everyone to the college's achievements. The outcomes approach of the past five years establishes targets, gets results, and keeps RCC on the move. It introduces the concept of change and sets the stage for yearly outcomes.

As this process has evolved, it has been incrementally implemented down the organizatinal hierarchy. Now, the Superintendent, cabinet members, department chairs, and faculty are involved. As RCC has become more experienced in planning, division and department objectives have been created. This process is a developing system throughout the college.

The Accreditation document, which contains a three-part approach--description, appraisal, and plan--has also been used as a planning device by pulling out the 83 plans that emerged. All plans have been reviewed and assigned to cabinet-level areas with timelines. This has created a climate for change and planning.

## Current Issues

Evan Vail, Dean of Research and Planning, has focused on two college issues in the past four years: retention and attrition, and grade inflation. A 1979 attrition chart showed that only 69% of those students who entered the college completed the semester. RCC was determined to improve this percentage. Retention improved in 1981-82, partly due to opening meetings in the Fall led by John Roeche (University of Texas) in which he emphasized retention techniques. There was also increased faculty interest in retention. By 1982-83, retention increased to 80%, an 11% improvement over a four-year period. For 1983-84 tne goal is 90%. The new assessment program should help RCC progress toward this desired outcome.

Reducing grade inflation was not originally a college objective. When statewide reports from the State University system (CSU) came in, students who transferred to CSU in 1980-81 had a higher grade point differential than students in previous years. This wider differential was due to higher GPAs from RCC, not from lower grades as CSU. Thus, grade inflation became a college priority. During the 1982-83 pre-school activities, a workshop was held which involved faculty members in a discussion on ways to reduce grade inflation. A year later, instead of the "A" grade, the most common grade (after the "W") was the "B" grade. This year one of the college objectives, communicated by President Kane to the college deans and department chairs at the beginning of the 1983-84 school year, is that making of the "C" grade more common than the "B" grade and the "B" grade more common than the "A" grade. Each academic department has this goal as one of its objectives.

## Process of Strategic Planning

Howard Larsen, Vice President and Academic Dean, explained that Chuck Kane has created a climate for change which has provided the college an "uplifting" experience. There is an attitude of being on the move and the committed resourses to bring it about. As an example, the student assessment program was strengthened by sending Larsen and another staff member around the country to gather information and formulate a plan to accomplish that goal. After setting up a climate where objectives and outcomes could be met, last year it became critical to look ahead--5, 10, 15 years down the road. There were some notions that change was going to take place at RCC. Because of this, Kane recommended a closer look at the future of the Riverside Community College District--and the development of

"strategic planning." To achieve this he asked Larsen to create a strategic planning document. Larsen was relieved of all his institutional responsibilities in order to devote a full five weeks to this project. The document produced is entitled "Meeting the Challenge of Change in the Decade Ahead." Copies are available to any interested parties.

Two projections were made for the RCC District: anticipated growth and the possibility that enrollments could outstrip facilities. Because RCC has created a strategic planning framework, the solution to possible future problems would not be a reduction in enrollments but rather a "working with what we have." RCC administrators believe that planning has to be the major role of management. Things will not just happen; there must be an administrative commitment. An assessment of strengths and weaknesses must take place, with an eye on the future. Some people conceptualize planning as the "creation of a beautiful scenario" of future plans. Instead, one must figure how "to get where you want to be." This involves strategic planning. Balance must be achieved between societal reality and institutional ideals.

There are three categories of planning: strategic planning which includes the institution and its social environment, procedural planning which is within the institution, what you will do to get where you want to be, and operational planning which includes immediate steps with the locus primarily in programs.

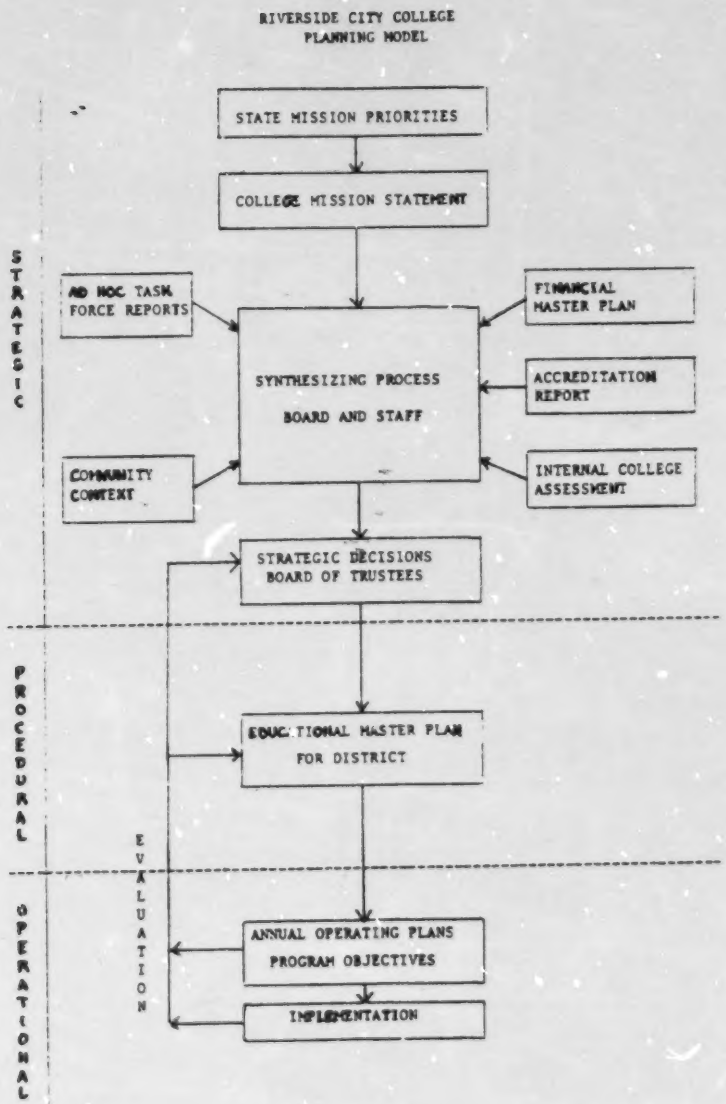
There are some problems to be considered when an institution uses strategic planning. Assumptions which may appear to be self-evident, must be made. For example: (1) The future will be different from the present. While this may seem simplistic, financial problems in many institutions today are the result of thinking that didn't make this assumption. (2) Strategic planning is inherently dynamic --one must float loose, be flexible. Strategic planning is not static. An institution must be able to shift and respond to changing trends. (3) An institution must take risks--the right and desired risks.

These notions impelled the administration to consider the following: (1) what direction does the college want to take, (2) choices between the alternatives that exist, (3) how limited resources can be used most efficiently, and (4) the need to establish greater consensus on what the college is doing. Two years ago there was far less consensus on the RCC campus than there is today.

There were some cautions found while pursuing these purposes. One was the realization that institution change is difficult. A mission is unique. What is done at one campus does not necessarily apply at RCC, even though the colleges may share a common environment. Since the purpose of planning is to improve the institution according to its mission, the planning process must also be unique. Consequently, the newly created strategic planning document, "Meeting the Challenge of Change in the Decade Ahead," was presented with a particular look at the planning model (Chart 4a). In the planning document consideration was given to: demographics, community environment, employment potentialities, delivery systems for education and the future for finance and public policy in education. From this basic information a series of 28 inferences was drawn. These were possible scenarios of strategic plans and

possibilities. They were fed into a central process. Another method

CHART 4a



of implementing change in the past several years has been to develop task forces. Information derived from these and other reports was fed into a central process and accumulated in the strategic planning document. Also considered was community vision of the institutional mission and finances. RCC's business manager provided scenarios of what could happen with the financial restraints that could be imposed. The best possibilities and worst realities were presented and because of recent cutbacks, the worst did happen. But RCC was able to respond because there was understanding. Through strategic planning previous decisions had been made. Additionally, the Accredition Self-Study which has been tied into the strategic planning process, lays out future considerations.

The College's internal college assessment document was given to the Board of Trustees at a three-day off-campus session. The document was discussed, and decisions were made for this district for the decade ahead.

The process for strategic planning at this institution required three major elements: (1) there must be a commitment on the part of administration to look ahead and commit resources; (2) the district had to be willing to pull information from any possible source and integrate it into the possible scenarios; and (3) managers must get together and make concrete decisions as to where the college wants to be and how it's going to get there.

In retrospect, Kane called the participants' attention to three points: (1) the internal assessment was difficult but a very positive process to go through; (2) the Accreditation document has been utilized as a planning document; and (3) the financial master plan enables the college to stay on top of the financial situation and be responsive to district needs, especially in these financially critical times.

Although RCC is a low wealth district, it is nevertheless (1) keeping its eye on what the district should be, (2) keeping the district moving, and (3) getting more people involved. These are all difficult challenges.

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Workshop participants were asked to analyze the case study by raising questions, actively expressing opinions, and sharing experiences. The following questions and answers generated much interest:

> WHAT WERE SOME OF THE RISKS THAT RCC HAS TAKEN?
>
> The annexation of territory. Geographically and politically it was desirable to inquire whether that territory (the Corona-Norco Unified School District) should be annexed. Information was generated with implications and future potential. As a result of a three-day Board of Trustees' meeting, it was decided the property should be acquired. This was a risk.
>
> There are visible, favorable risks, i.e., cosmetic changes in the facilities. Other risks are not so predictable.

One risk involved a program evaluation which was undertaken. The college made evaluations of every program and shared the results with the various departments. When you indicate that "some programs are marginal" you are taking a risk in sharing that kind of information, but this open access to information was important and the college took the risk.

WHAT WAS THE THINKING OF THE BOARD?

RCC has a highly educated Board who have key leadership roles in the community. The Board has been progressively receiving information. They were motivated to get together for three days to discuss strategic planning. A strategic planner from Northrup Corporation spoke to the group to give an industrial perspective as compared to RCC's educational perspective. The Board of Trustees and management staff heard what strategic planning was all about and the possibilities that lay ahead 10 to 15 years from now.

SINCE YOU HAVE A MASTER PLANNER/CONSULTANT, HOW DO YOU FACILITATE ACCEPTANCE OF YOUR STAFF?

Creating change at RCC has been difficult. But people seem to feel good about it now. There was broad acceptance of the program review process across the institution. Faculty was not surprised that some program recommendations were "caution" or "probationary."

WAS THE EVALUATION PROCESS FOR OTHER SEGMENTS OF THE COLLEGE (BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS, STUDENT SERVICES, ETC.) DIFFERENT FROM THE ACADEMIC SERVICE EVALUATION?

Yes. Their process was somewhat different. This was the first time that the student service evaluation process had been tried. The institution believes in looking at what it's doing. In the business office they underwent an internal review.

IF A PROGARM HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND SUSPENSION IS RECOMMENDED, WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE POLITICAL PROCESS THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MIGHT GO THROUGH?

Any termination will bring problems with it. The Board, however, supported termination and therefore there were fewer upheavals. Referring to Keller's book, Academic Strategy, Kane pointed out that cutting programs is often inevitable but that there is a way of doing it that helps sustain faculty morale--cut weakest programs and retain strong ones. This

approach is better than cutting a bit off everywhere, thereby lowering quality.

WHEN DID THE PLANNING ACTUALLY START?

The President initiated the planning process in 1978 and noted the need for its flexibility from year to year. Kane envisions a different process as the college evolves.

One inquirer noted that the RCC approach would have been very difficult to achieve at his college because of lack of confidence.

Kane responded by saying that the support of the RCC Board has helped make it possible.

HOW DO YOU GET A BOARD TO SUPPORT THIS KIND OF ENDEAVOR?

Without a supportive Board, an outside consultant would need to be brought in. The Board is a weather vane and the institution has to understand that. A person from the Association of California Community College Administrators was brought in to talk on MBO as well as someone on strategic planning.

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO KEEP THE CURRENT MOMENTUM GOING? IS YOUR FOCUS ON THE OBJECTIVES?

The departmental chairs are now involved. We now have college, area, division/program department, and accreditation objectives that involve the whole faculty.

(Comments by an observer.) ONE COLLEGE STARTED AT THE OTHER END, INVOLVING THE ENTIRE INSTITUTION. THE PLAN WAS TO SEE WHAT THEY WANTED CHANGED. EVERYTHING THAT CAME UP WAS ACCEPTABLE TO THE ADMINISTRATION. THE FACULTY WAS THE FACILITATOR, NOT THE ADMINISTRATION. RECOMMENDATIONS WERE BEING FED INTO THE MASTER PLAN. THIS COLLEGE STARTED AT THE OTHER END.

HOW MUCH DIFFICULTY DID YOU HAVE WITH THE STAFF IN LISTING OBJECTIVES?

The administration gave the department chairs the two objectives for the 1983-84 year (grade inflation and part-time faculty evaluations) and then the chairs were told they could approach these in their own way. The development of other department objectives was encouraged.

(Comments by Chuck Kane.)

"It was fortunate that the observer college that

commented above had a strong administration running that district so that people had a good sense of knowing who they were and where they were. If you look at our accreditation process you find a cross-circulation between management and faculty--it actively involved 135 faculty members. The mission statement is important because, while it's general in that it in some way reflects other colleges' statements, it's specific and unique because Riverside is different from other community colleges. In Search of Excellence was referred to, to suggest that values (standards) need to be shared by the entire faculty. In this way the managers can identify areas that need to be sharpened. One value at RCC is that they are student centered. Faculty and administration should be looking for the same things--the same values. This is an ideal to be sought."

OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTARY

During the FIPSE Workshop there were several salient ideas that emerged. Since 1978, Riverside City College has implemented long-range planning. The process began on a small scale and has evolved into a fully-developed, smoothly running strategic planning process.

RCC's successful approach offers several key concepts useful to other community college planners, regardless of demographic, employment or environmental differences.

1. The development of a college theme fosters more universal sentiment and cooperation amongst the various constituencies in the college. The idea of sharing a vision of college ideals also brings about a greater sense of cohesion and mutuality.

2. Strategic planning is inherently dynamic. It changes with the changing face of the college's and community's needs. It must be flexible and respond to unexpected as well as predictable trends and events.

3. In order to grow, a college must be willing to take risks - the right and desired risks that can enhance the college and promote change both internally and externally.

4. The college climate is important so that an atmosphere for change and planning is created and sensed. The college should be guided by considering "where it is" and "where it wants to go" in the decades ahead.

The Riverside City College planning process receives its impetus from the philosophy that excellence can be achieved through innovation. That innovation is being brought about through the large-scale, dynamic, flexible, and on-going nature of strategic planning.

# Chapter 5

# THE ANNUAL REVIEW AND PLANNING PROCESS AT YOSEMITE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Chapter 5

# THE ANNUAL REVIEW AND PLANNING PROCESS AT YOSEMITE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

## INTRODUCTION

"It is a way of life at Yosemite Community College District," Superintendent Tom Van Groningen said of the Annual Review and Planning Process, the object of the case study presented in Modesto on November 22, 1983 to 54 workshop participants representing 13 commnity college districts. In its second year of operation at the time of the case study, the process is an information-based planning and budgeting system. The process begins at the basic organizational units, such as college departments and moves unit goals, plans and budgetary requests accumulatively from sub-unit to unit to college to district. It is described as participatory and "bottom-up" and links planning and budgeting processes. Very important to the overall process is an assessment system, which gathers, processes, stores, and reports essential information. Because it builds on the foundations of the basic organizational units, the process has the potential of involving a broad range of college and district personnel.

The Annual Review and Planning Process has been developing since the Summer of 1979, when uncertainties and problems exacerbated by Proposition 13 (1978) and collective bargaining (1976) reached a serious state. Van Groningen reported, "we thought...there's got to be a better process...[a process] that involves people at all levels...[and] enables the district to respond to crisis more effectively." Starting from that "miserable summer" of hostile adversarial employer/employee relations, suspicion and doubt, the present process has evolved. Initially, goals poited for the planning process were both product and process oriented. First, it was decided to gather information, assess operations, and generate alternatives. Emphasis was on a planning process, however, not a plan, per se. Three steps were set out: (1) find out what we (Yosemite Community College District [YCCD]) are doing (What is), (2) find out what we can, should or ought to do (What Should Be), and (3) find out how to close the gap between What is and What Should Be, when and where desirable. Over a period of several years, an assessment program keynoted by the motto "Measurement, Planning, Improvement," was designed and implemented, as was a planning and budgeting system. Important, concurrent process goals included building confidence in the system, winning support and participation, and alleviating adverse attitudes. In effect Van Groningen said, "We wanted to open up the operations of YCCD; if we're doing anything that can't stand the test of a review in the light of day...we ought not to be doing it."

The process has developed in a complex organizational setting. Yosemite Community College District consists of two colleges and Central Services, and the District Offices. Modesto Junior College (MJC) is the larger and oldest of the colleges. It dates back to 1921 and is rich in history and tradition. MJC is presently housed in two campuses at some distance from

one another in the city of Modesto. MJC has a full-time faculty of 191. It served 16,176 students in Spring 1983. There are 16 planning units at MJC: 11 are curriculum-based units, and others include community services, student services, general administration, instructional administration, and general institutional services.

Columbia College (CC), located some 60 miles distant near the town of Sonora in the historic Gold Rush Country of the Sierra foothills, is much smaller and newer. It has 40 full-time faculty and 13 planning units: eight curriculum based and five others with the same designation as MJC. Columbia College served 3,726 students in Spring 1983. The District Office is the third part of YCCD. It is housed near the newer MJC campus. It has four units.

## YCCD'S ANNUAL REVIEW AND PLANNING PROCESS

### Premises

Certain premises underlie the YCCD process and the manner in which it has been developed. The process should grow slowly, it was decided early on, be low profile and low key, and be fashioned by those who it is intended to serve. Though the literature would be searched and ideas gathered, it would be essentially invented "at home." Planning to plan should be done by committees "as small as possible but as representative as possible." There should be no time limits, no hidden agenda, no blueprint drawn up in advance to predetermine the outcome. Importantly, the "planning to plan" process as well as the assessment, and review and planning process, should have a complete, unfaltering commitment from top management.

The review and planning process also has underlying premises. It should be continuous, be on an annual cycle, be staged in clear, sequential phases, and tie budget requests to operating unit needs, operations, and plans. It should be informed by comprehensible data readily accessible by computer. This quantified information should be timely, accurate, comprehensive, and uniform, and be capable of portraying, in the aggregate, what is going on in the district. It should widely involve unit personnel under the supervision of unit managers. Together, the assessment system and the planning/budgeting process should be an integral part of the overall college and district decision-making process.

### Planning to Plan

In the Summer of 1978, management began to discuss alternatives to the existing planning process. The following year, brainstorming sessions were held and ideas explored. General, informal conversations continued and information was gathered on planning and information systems, evaluation, and assessment. In Fall 1980, a steering committee was established by the Superintendent, composed of five managers and facilitated by the Resource Development Office. This committee was to determine "structure and direction for a broadly-based district-wide committee(s) whose task will be to develop procedures and instruments to conduct an assessment of the district's total operation." The term assessment, rather than "program evaluation," was stressed to avoid miscommunication and negative feelings.

The steering committee concluded that the assessment could be divided into three phases:

Phase I - What Is

Phase II - What Should Be

Phase III - How to get from 1 to 2--if there is a difference

## Phase I: What Is

A Phase I committee was established and given this charge: "to identify and inventory existing instructional programs and services district-wide." Representatives were appointed to the committee by college presidents, academic senates, and the classified staff bargaining unit. At the workshop, a member of the committee described the operations committee procedures as consensus based: "We never took a vote." This process, which was facilitated, as opposed to chaired, was often reported to have led to the "falling away" of stereotypic organizational role perceptions among members of the committee as mutual trust and commitment to the task developed. Continual, patient interaction within the committee and with constituencies led eventually to a decision on what information to seek and how it should be reported. "It was ultimately decided to develop an ongoing information system capable of generating the necessary information to support an atlas-type document which would display in graphic form most of the information required by any decision-makers within the district." ("Planning to Plan: The Process to Develop the Process," Resource Development Office, YCCD, n.d., p. 2.)

Now in its second edition, YCCD's Assessment Atlas is a 70-plus page document conveying statistical data on the 33 planning units of Columbia College, Modesto Junior College, and Central Services, as well as aggregate data on the district as a whole. By planning unit, data is reported on (1) staff, (2), financial, (3) services; method of instruction, sections/enrollment, (4) facilities, and (5) students; age, sex, units carried, ethnicity and enrollments.

Report and on-line information are available to back-up and supplement Atlas information. It is gathered and organized according to the California state-required Taxonomy of Programs (TOP Code). Summaries can be generated that report information by planning unit (e.g., Arts, Humanities, and Speech) and sub-unit (e.g., Music) on (1) staff; instructional and non-instructional, (2) financial; salaries, supplies, operating expenses, average daily attendance (ADA), (3) services; enrollments, method of instruction, (4) facilities, and (5) students; age, sex, ethnicity. Also available on-line for unit planning and budgeting are continuous reports on current and historical budget allocations.

## Phase II: What Should Be

A Phase II committee was organized when the Steering Committee determined that the time had arrived to begin working of the "What Should Be" phase.

The committee had 12 members from management, faculty, staff, and students. Its charge was "to develop an approach to assessing district-wide 'What Should Be' which will result in the maximum input possible through a self-study process." (Ibid., p. 3.) Working with the deliberate space characteristic of the overall process, this committee explored approaches to assessment. Ultimately, an Assessment Guide was developed, in which the procedures for review and planning an producing the unit-level plan are set out.

An Oversight Committee has now been established. Carrying over several persons from previous committees, it is intended to monitor the process and, where appropriate, facilitate its operation.

Procedures

Two graphics, a calendar and a flow chart, will depict the stages, sequences, and procedures conceptualized for the Annual Review and Planning Process.

The calendar (Chart 5a) shows the sequential stages by which the "bottom-up" process unfolds. It also shows how the information base of the previous and the current year are utilized in the process.

The "Assessment Guide," a manual of more than 60 pages issued by the Resource Development Office, gives detailed instructions on planning and budgeting procedures. In it are facsimiles of the forms to be completed and fed into the overall process. A review of the prior year is recommended to the planning units as a first step. Next, the unit is advised to assess client and unit needs and gather information. The unit then develops its operational plan, for which five sequential steps are advised (Assessment Guide, pp. 9-16).

(1) review and revise unit statement of function;

(2) review and revise unit goals;

(3) development and history of unit activities;

(4) develop a unit budget;

(5) prepare recommendations for change.

When the unit operational plan is prepared, it moves into the district-wide system, as depicted in the flow diagram for the Annual Review and Planning Process, Chart 5b.

Unit operational plans merge into the larger, complex college and district decision-making processes.

CHART 5a

## ANNUAL REVIEW AND PLANNING PROCESS

### CALENDAR

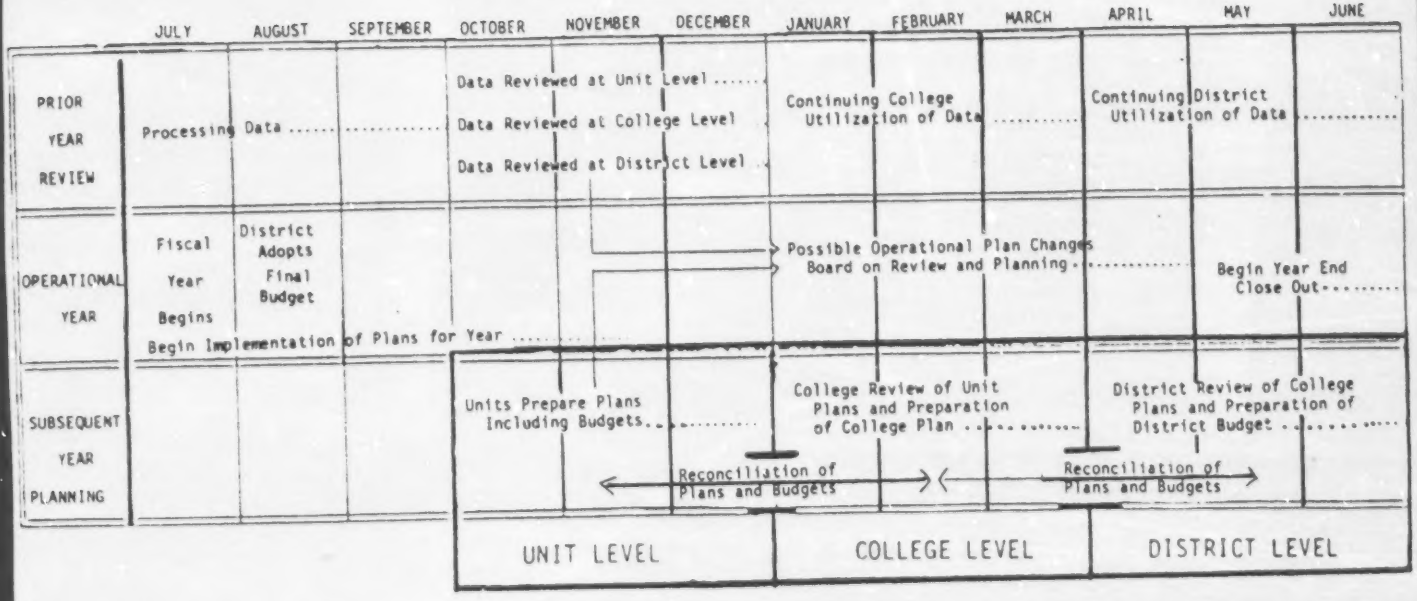
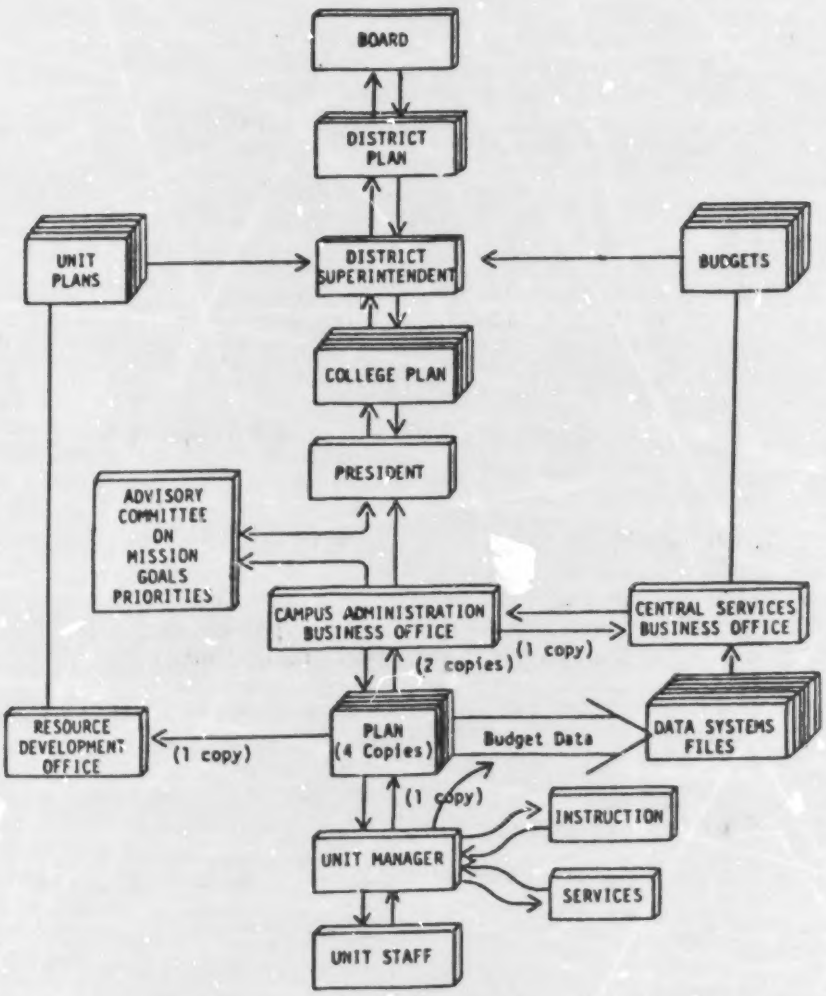


CHART 5b

THE ANNUAL REVIEW AND PLANNING PROCESS
FLOW DIAGRAM



## Events to Date and Work to be Done

At the time of the presentation of the YCCD case study, the Annual Review and Planning Process had been four years in the making and midway through the second year of actual operation. It has been developed slowly and steadily. It is vitally dependent on the information systems that come from the assessment projects, and is described by the YCCD case study presenters as a decentralized, bottom-up process that ties planning at the unit level to the budgeting process. It is a new feature in the overall YCCD operation systems. YCCD case study presenters characterized it is a positive, productive addition to unit, college and district operations.

Improvement in the processes and their products is continual, as experience gathers and the data base accumulates. The heavy investments of time, energy, and resources of the first year when the preparation of the unit operational plan was a new (and doubt and suspicion engendering) experience hav begun to return pay-offs. This year is much easier, it is reported. And Van Groningen points to obvious, practical benefits such as improved accuracy in data, and "holistic" monitoring capabilities as well as less tangible, subtle benefits such as greater openness and candor, and improved employer/employee relations.

Work remains to be done. At MJC, a community needs assessment is underway to provide an element of informational input heretofore missing from the process. Also, a committee is developing criteria to be used in the event of budget and program cutbacks. At CC, the unit plans developed in the first year are now being reviewed and, where appropriate, updated and developed further.

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Invited by workshop facilitator Dale Tillery to think through the case study as it was presented and to offer viewpoints and experiences as well as ask questions, the participants made many contributions which pointed to salient, interesting, as well as problematic aspects of the YCCD process. These contributions have been combined and generalized to form a framework for the following discussion and analysis.

### Planning to Plan

The decisions on how to plan for the planning process, who to involve, where and how to seek information, what pace to set, and what to expect by way of outcomes, are critically important precursors to the actual implementation of a planning process. As recounted by the case study presenters, YCCD's approach was inhouse, patient, low profile, and relatively open-ended and evolutionary. In its pace and time-frame, it contrasts sharply to the planning approach that predetermines outcomes and stipulates a time-frame with specified target dates. Ideas for the process were gathered by conventional research methods or, as Van Groningen commented, in essence, an initial search was made for "a wheel" that someone else had invented which "we would make turn." This approach was discarded as unproductive, and while the early planners did not want to reinvent the wheel, they concluded, as a keystone tenet in the "planning to plan" phase, that those who would use the system should

design it. At the same time, the process was construed as a staff responsibility; hence the community was not involved. While the Governing Board was kept informed and did spend an entire day developing a statement of "philosophical guidelines," subsequently updated in another all-day workshop, it was not cast in an active role in the development of the planning process. Constituency groups (senates, classified bargaining unit) were asked to designate representatives to the various committees.

Faculty and Management Participation and Acceptance

YCCD leadership found it necessary to be patient and open as the plan for the process emerged and moved toward implementation. Credibility, trust, and participation had to be earned from faculty, managers, and staff. There was "selling" required as well as firm, unwavering commitment from the Superintendent and top managers. Initiatives in assessment and information reporting will quite unexpectedly arouse apprehensions, particularly in a time when program review and evaluation can very likely be a prelude to cutbacks in resources and even personnel. Apprehensiveness of the system and its potentially "negative" uses can be abated, however, it was reported, when the information is used in candid, open discussions, and decision-making. The system gains acceptance when it is integral to "positive" decisions, such as the MJC decision to commit a large amount of resources to the future expansion of computer instruction. Important also are on-going efforts to teach people how to access information and to use the system.

Time and Place. In the four years since the first steps toward the present process were taken, serious and complicating changes have occurred in the environment in which community colleges operate. The YCCD presenters were asked if they were to start now (1983-84) would they go about it differently...or do it at all? Yes, YCCD would do it, but differently - probably in response to changed circumstances. The present fiscal constraints having exacertabed conflict and having posed a very real possibility of serious cutbacks in program and personnel, more "selling" and building trust would be necessary now.

Centralization and Decentralization. At YCCD, decentralization of control and planning is a general management goal, as well as a goal for the Annual Review and Planning Process. The emphass on the "bottom-up," unit-initiated operational plan is indicative of this goal. Yet, a workshop participant observed, there is a centralizing effect inherent in (1) a standardized method for participatory planning, and (2) standarized procedures and formats for data collection and reporting. YCCD responded that decision-making on budget and curriculum is intended to be decentralized, while straight-forward business functions such as accounting and personnel are centralized.

What is New and Different? A participant observed that planning is not new nor is information gathering, so what is new and different at YCCD as a result of the Annual Planning and Review process? Van Groningen responded that the process introduced a very new aspect, that is, a holistic view of district operations. Unit operational plans describe and quantify activities, goals, plans, and key numerical information. Seen as a whole, the plans afford a monitoring capability that does not contravene a management goal of decentralization. The data produced is now "public,"

and becomes the basis for units making a case for a claim on district resources. Further, the advent of the information system has brought an improvement in the accuracy, completeness and comprehensiveness in reporting and accounting, and also unit responsibilities for planning and managing their own budgets.

## OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTARY

From the beginning the promotion of the process appears to have been conducted in a low profile, low-key manner, even though the problems and issues it was intended to address were of a commanding magnitude. Only a few, rather small committees were chartered in what is an in-house operation. YCCD's planning process offers a striking contrast to planning processes of other districts where circumstances, belief systems, and personalities have urged a much more visible, high-energy, "cast-of-thousands" approach. Instead of adding new structures to the governance system, YCCD built with the basic, existing organizational units and utilized existing channels, even if they were moderately realigned and given emphasis. Innovation has largely been in the way data are gathered, processed and reported, and in the unit operational plan concept and its attendant processes.

While the information system and the planning system were in development, established institutional routines and processes continued to operate. The new process did not displace or supercede other routines: as one college president put it, "...the [Annual Review and Budgeting Process] is one part, a big part..." of the larger decision-making process. An observer can get the impression that the process awaits its most strenuous testing, as well as its fullest maturing. How tightly woven into the YCCD fabric is the Process? Does it work? Van Groningen spoke to the utility of the process and its assimilation into the characteristic modes of YCCD decision-making when he noted that the first round of unit operational plans yielded an aggregated, unduplicated cost of $27 million. The budget requests were reasonable, appropriate, and tied to unit goals and activities, he said, not at all irresponsible "ask-for-the-moon" behaviors some had predicted. Yet, the requests exceeded the $20 million revenues forecast. How was the gap handled? Van Groningen reported the situation was made known, unit operational plans recycled, and necessary reductions made at the unit and college level. In other words, the process worked.

The Annual Review and Planning Process is information based and extends throughout the district. Some interesting properties appear to inhere in such a system. A momentum developes within the system, as it "gears up." Personnel are assigned to its functions and by increments it becomes a part of way way things are done. Initial heavy investments of time, energy, problem-solving, and conflict resolution lead to a desire among personnel to enjoy some benefits of the investments; hence, the first year's iteration is described as "hard work" while the second iteration is said to be "much easier." Another property apparently inherent in the system is that of self-correction, which is especially served by a slow-growth pace of development, as it would be served by continuous formative evaluation and intentional adjustments. Another property is a spill-over effect of the system on other aspects of institutional life and operations. In appraising the process, Superintendent Van Groningen spoke of subtle, yet important changes in employer/employee relations, in

morale, in attitudes of faculty and management (and especially of his own) as suspicion and doubt give way to the mood and tone conveyed by the openness and candor of the process.

Perhaps because YCCD is an historic and traditional district in which its veteran personnel take mission and goals to be tacit and self-evident, and perhaps because the planning process has been insistently "bottom-up" and accumulative, there is no highly visible, readily-observed promulgation of district mission and goals. In a sense, the aggregation of unit goals become a de facto description of district goals. If so, interesting and complex issues of compatibility, consistency and priority among unit goals are raised. Follow-up with district personnel indicates that more emphasis is being placed on the definition of College and Central Services' mission and goals, correlation with unit goals, and activities and resource allocation than occurred in the first year.

The YCCD case study emphasized the importance of process in the planning and implementation states. The consensus approach used in Phase I is essentially a complex group process that requires the development of facilitative skills and attutides among committee members. These will not appear adventitiously: they must be cultivated. The overall process would need to dedicate resources and time to the acquisition requisite process skills.

## Chapter 6

# UNIQUENESS AND COMMONALITY

# IN STRATEGIC PLANNING MODELS

## UNIQUENESS

The four cases in strategic planning argue persuasively for the fit between this mode of planning and the unique characteristics of individual community colleges. Like their peer institutions elsewhere in the country, San Francisco, Long Beach, Riverside and Yosemite community college districts are different in their histories, organization and leadership patterns, and their responses to local communities. Consequently, the four colleges have used common elements of strategic planning in quite different ways. In doing so, they have affirmed a fundamental premise of this new approach to planning: The process of planning must fit the individual characteristics of institutions and their people. There is no single nor ideal way to begin, conduct, and use the outcomes of strategic planning. So it is not surprising that each of the community college districts views its planning as a "home-grown" project, even though the participants are familiar with the theory and practices of strategic planning. Nevertheless, common values, essential components, and cycles of behavior are manifest in each planning model.

## COMMONALITIES

Before highlighting institutional variations and interventions, it seems appropriate to recapture those common dimensions of strategic planning:

- THE PROCESS IS THE THING! As in theory, each of the institutions committed itself to a continuing process rather than to a plan to be written and filed away. This is a compelling premise for each college. It was communicated in different ways but always represented a move away from past experience. One group refers to its "plan" as a loose-leaf notebook which would be updated and changed as the process continued. Another views planning as the major on-going role of management. All envision the recycling of the phases of planning over time; in effect, a "continuous system."

- PLANNING IS PROACTIVE! The reader will note the common theme of "being on the move" and of being results-oriented. One team stresses the importance of demonstrating the "fruits of the planning effort," particularly in making sure that the planning process "drives the budget." A generalized model for this relationship is shown in the following chart.

CHART 6a

Source: NCHEMS Management Development Program, 1983.

Linkages Among Strategic Planning, Operational
Planning, and Resource Allocation in an Integrative Process

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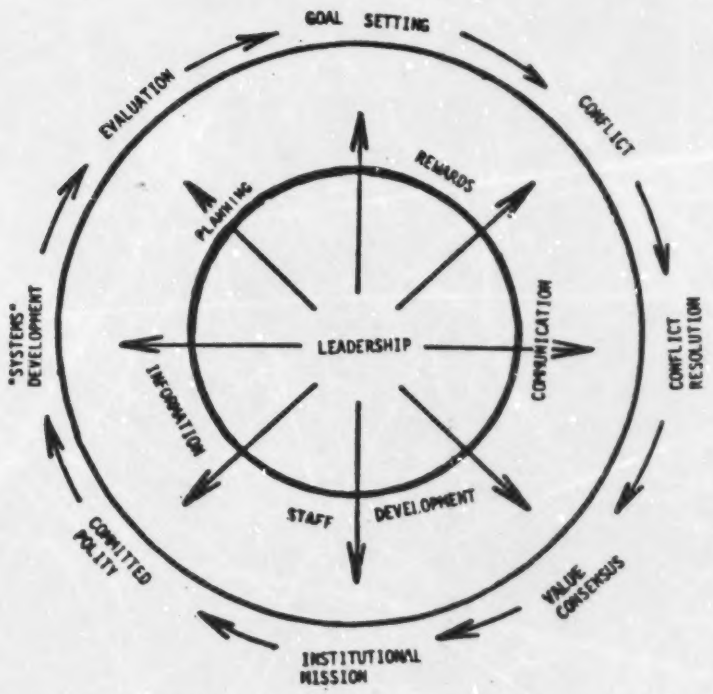
- LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORT ARE ESSENTIAL! The chief executive officer of each district personally affirms this essential aspect of strategic planning, and it is reinforced by the institutional teams. "Strong leadership...is necessary in moving from incrementalism to strategic planning." "An holistic view of the district" is possible only with leadership and support at the top levels. In another district strategic planning was the top priority of the new chief exective officer. In still another "the individual at the top" is committed to an on-going planning process. In Chart 6b the inner leadership cycle that drives the sequence of planning activities is illustrated.

Chart 6b

**strategic Planning cycle**




Source: Dale Tillery, unpublished address on Executive Leadership to community college presidents of the states of New York and Washington, 1979, sponsored by Nadia Systems Corporation.



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- THOSE WHO USE THE SYSTEM SHOULD DESIGN IT! Wide participation is universal in strategic planning, but each case illustrates different techniques for gaining and sustaining wide participation. It seems likely that these differences reflect differences in intra-district relationships as well as in leadership styles. Whether the decision was to "go slowly with a low profile" or to create "a large-scale, complex project" at the very beginning, there was a common goal of broad understanding, participation, and "ownership" by the several constituency groups of the institution. Without such participation "you end up with a shelf document."

- INFORMATION IS POWER IN PLANNING! It is apparent from each of the cases that the colleges undertook major new efforts to gather reliable and useable information. These efforts included various kinds of forecasting and development of techniques for managing information in the planning process. "We sought a balance of 'hard' normative, as well as 'soft' qualitative information." Another team stresses the need for an "on-line computerized information system" with data which are "timely, accurate, comprehensive, uniform, and which can be aggregated." Another noted that forecasting and internal assessment documents were fed into the central planning processes. The FIPSE Project seeks to sharpen "soft/hard" data definitions. All discussed ways to reduce large amounts of information into "assumptions," "goals," "apprasial items," and institutional themes."

- MULTIPLE USES OF PLANNING. The cases were not those of single-purpose planning. Rather, each institution saw the planning process as part of management and accountability. In different ways the four teams envision the use of planning in budgeting and program review. Some were quite explicit about the uses of strategic planning in preparing the accreditation self-study. The cycling of these several activities to maximize efficienty and to enhance quality are implicit in the case reports.

## INVENTIONS IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

One of the most valuable aspects of the workshops and reports are inventive strategies, structures, and relationships in the four cases of community college planning. These fresh ideas suggest models for use or adaptation by other institutions. Because their meanings are either self-evident or explained in the appropriate chapters, these interesting ideas are listed without comment, but with reference to the appropriate chapter:

- SCANNING TEAMS as efficient and economic ways to check planning processes. (Ch 3)
- "LOOSE-LEAVE BINDER PLAN" (Ch 2)
- INSTITUTIONAL THEMES (Ch 4)
- BOTTOM-UP PROCESS: sub-units--unit--college--district. TOP MANAGEMENT SUPPORT (Ch 5)
- REITERATION OF PLANNING CYCLES (Ch 2)
- PROJECT NEWSLETTER, "Focus" (Ch 3)
- HOLISTIC VIEW OF DISTRICT OPERATIONS (Ch 5)
- DIALECTIC CONCEPT OF DUAL COORDINATORS - DECENTRALIZATION (Ch 3)
- DON'T APPOINT A PLANNER (Ch 3)
- WHAT IS, WHAT SHOULD BE, WHAT CAN BE (Ch 4)
- ANNUAL MANAGEMENT WORKSHOPS (Ch 4)
- GOAL OR SELF-KNOWLEDGE (Ch 2)
- OPEN ACCESS TO INFORMATION (Ch 5)

These and other experiences reported by the institutional teams lend themselves to replication or adaptation in other college settings.

## CONCLUSIONS

The case method was highly successful in stimulating interest in strategic planning. It revealed tested experiences in alternative ways of conducting and using planning in community colleges. In one way or another, each of the four institutions was involved in a "home-grown" process, one which seemed to fit the unique conditions of the colleges and relationships among constituencies. Nevertheless, none of the teams believed that it was inventing the wheel again. Quite the contrary, each early strategy, "planning to plan," involved looking around and learning from others. In all cases this meant reviewing relevant literature; and in some institutions sending key participants in planning to "state-of-the-art" conferences. In all cases there was willingness to share ideas about and "ownership" of the planning process.

Unique institutional settings resulted in (1) different paces for planning; (2) variations in centralization/decentralization of responsibilities for planning and management; (3) alternative strategies for gathering, sorting, and interpreting information; and (4) various ways of involving and informing constituencies. A universal theme was that of self-correction, and some of the strategies for achieving this essential objective are impressive.

The Workshops on Strategic Planning and this monograph were designed to improve planning in community colleges. Thus, they contribute to one of the primary objects of the Project to Improve Evaluation and Planning in Community Colleges (FIPSE). The workshops demonstrated strategies of the Project which are to: (1) bring together those who are in the forefront of evaluation and planning with those who are reassessing their current practices or are beginning new projects; (2) provide forums for sharing and evaluating ideas and practices in evaluation and planning; and (3) reporting the outcomes of such forums to the profession in ways that are useful.

This monograph is in the best of that tradition.

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